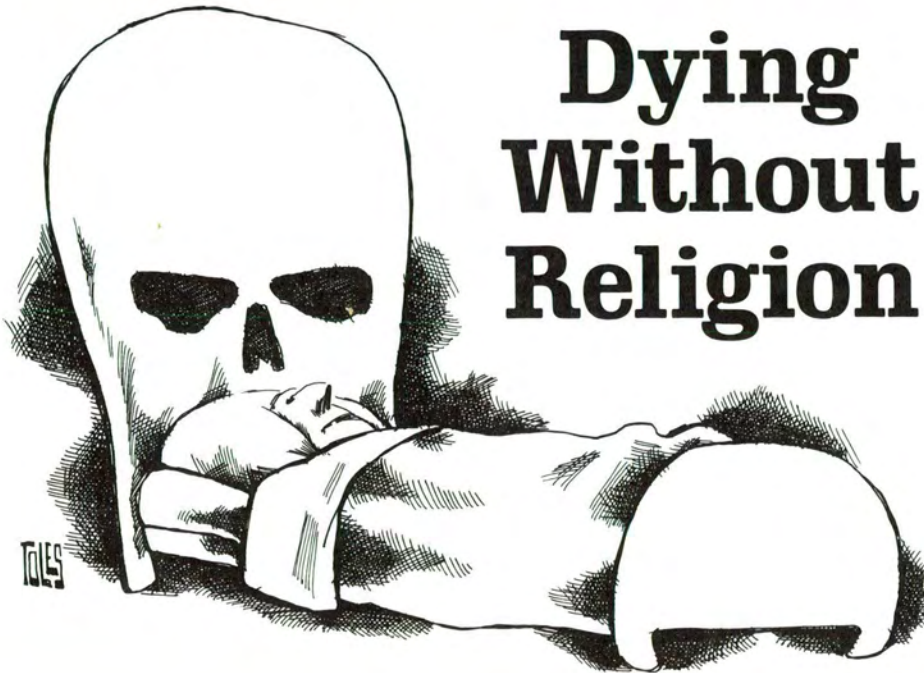


Free Inquiry

Summer 1990

Vol. 10, No. 3

\$4.00



Dying Without Religion

Why I Am Not a Methodist

Don DeHart Bronkema

The “Satanic Conspiracy”



*Shawn Carlson
and
Gerald A. Larue*

Phillips Stevens Jr.

**Also: Interview with Paul Krassner
Martin Gardner on Tammy Bakker
Moral Repression, Entrapment, and Pornography**

Contents

3 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	47 ON THE BARRICADES	57 IN THE NAME OF GOD
ARTICLES		
4 Dying Without Religion: Introduction.....	<i>Paul Kurtz</i>	
5 A Eupraxophic Declaration on Death and Dying	<i>Verle Muhrer</i>	
7 Saying Farewell Honestly	<i>Daniel O'Hara</i>	
8 Let Thy Will Be Done	<i>Eugene J. Daly</i>	
9 Making the Best of the Worst	<i>John Buchanan</i>	
11 Theological Mythologies and Naturalistic Certitude	<i>Delos B. McKown</i>	
13 O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?	<i>Tim Madigan</i>	
14 Festivals and Transitions	<i>Vern Bullough</i>	
16 Defining—and Implementing—Eupraxophy.....	<i>Tom Flynn</i>	
19 A Eupraxopher's Agenda: Humanism and Religion	<i>R. Joseph Hoffmann</i>	
22 Why I Am Not a Methodist	<i>Don DeHart Bronkema</i>	
25 Giving the Devil Much More Than His Due.....	<i>Shawn Carlson and Gerald A. Larue</i>	
28 The Dangerous Folklore of Satanism	<i>Phillips Stevens Jr.</i>	
38 Thomas Aquinas's Complete Guide to Heaven and Hell.....	<i>Ronald A. Lindsay</i>	
40 Skepticism and Happiness.....	<i>Marvin Kohl</i>	
48 Mysterious Cult Misuses Humanist Label.....	<i>Bob von Holdt</i>	
50 The Influence of Robert Ingersoll.....	<i>Gordon Stein</i>	
35 INTERVIEW		
An Impolite Interview with Paul Krassner	<i>Tim Madigan</i>	
EDITORIALS		
43 Moral Repression in the United States, <i>Paul Kurtz</i> / Entrapment, Possession, and Pornography, <i>Vern Bullough</i>		
45 VIEWPOINTS		
Murder in the Name of Religion, <i>James A. Haught</i> / Some Fatherly Advice to Tammy Faye, <i>Martin Gardner</i>		
53 BOOKS		
Evolution Reinterpreted, <i>H. James Birx</i> / The First Secular Jew, <i>Paul Kurtz</i> / Books in Brief		
58 READERS' FORUM		
On the War on Drugs		

Editor: **Paul Kurtz**

Senior Editors: **Vern Bullough**, **Gerald Larue**

Executive Editor: **Tim Madigan**

Managing Editor: **Mary Beth Gehrman**

Special Projects Editor: **Brent Bailey**

Contributing Editors:

Robert S. Alley, professor of humanities, University of Richmond; **H. James Birx**, professor of anthropology, Canisius College; **Jo-Ann Boydston**, director, Dewey Center; **Paul Edwards**, professor of philosophy, Brooklyn College; **Albert Ellis**, director, Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy; **Roy P. Fairfield**, social scientist, Union Graduate School; **Joseph Fletcher**, theologian, University of Virginia Medical School; **Antony Flew**, philosopher, Reading University, England; **Levi Fragell**, executive director Human-Etisk Forbund, Norway; **Adolf Grünbaum**, professor of philosophy, University of Pittsburgh; **R. Joseph Hoffmann**, professor of humanities, California State University at Sacramento; **Marvin Kohl**, philosopher, State University of New York College at Fredonia; **Jean Kotkin**, executive director, American Ethical Union; **Ronald A. Lindsay**, attorney, Washington, D.C.; **Delos B. McKown**, professor of philosophy, Auburn University; **Howard Radest**, director, Ethical Culture Schools; **Robert Rimmer**, author; **Svetozar Stojanovic**, professor of philosophy, University of Belgrade; **Thomas Szasz**, psychiatrist, Upstate Medical Center, Syracuse; **V. M. Tarkunde**, Supreme Court Judge, India; **Richard Taylor**, professor of philosophy, Union College; **Rob Tielman**, professor, University of Utrecht; **Sherwin Wine**, North American Committee for Humanism

Associate Editors: **Doris Doyle**, **Steven L. Mitchell**, **Lee Nisbet**, **Gordon Stein**, **Andrea Szalanski**

Editorial Associates: **Robert Basil**, **Jim Christopher**, **Fred Condo Jr.**, **Thomas Flynn**, **Thomas Franczyk**, **James Martin-Diaz**, **Philip Mass**, **Molleen Matsumura**

Executive Director, CODESH, Inc.: **Jean Millholland** Executive Director, African-Americans for Humanism: **Norm Allen Jr.**

Chief Data Officer: **Richard Seymour** Typesetting: **Paul E. Loynes** Audio Technician: **Vance Vigrass**

Staff: **Kim Gallo**, **Steve Karr**, **Anthony Nigro**, **Alfreda Pidgeon**, **Ranjit Sandhu**

FREE INQUIRY (ISSN 0272-0701) is published quarterly by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH, Inc.), a nonprofit corporation, 3159 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215. Phone (716) 834-2921. Copyright ©1990 by CODESH, Inc. Second-class postage paid at Buffalo, New York, and at additional mailing offices. National distribution by International Periodicals Distributors, San Diego, California.

Subscription rates: \$22.50 for one year, \$39.00 for two years, \$54.00 for three years, \$4.00 for current issue; \$5.00 for back issues. Address subscription orders, changes of address, and advertising to: FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005.

Manuscripts, letters, and editorial inquiries should be addressed to: The Editor, FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005. All manuscripts must be double-spaced and should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or publisher. Postmaster: Send address changes to FREE INQUIRY, P.O. Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005.

Letters to the Editor

The secular priesthood

Richard Taylor hit the nail on the head ("The American Judiciary as a Secular Priesthood," Spring 1990). Like the Bible, the Constitution is worshiped and revered far more than it is read and understood.

I agree with Taylor's conclusions that "the judiciary is, paradoxically, a despotic bulwark of liberty," but it is important to note the other side of the coin, that the judiciary can and has acted to curtail the democratic will in elitist ways as well. Taylor cites cases where the Court has created freedoms and liberties that were denied by the democratic majority. These cases, however, were more the result of individual activist judges than of the legal system itself.

When Alexander Hamilton advocated judicial review in *The Federalist*, No. 78, he had in mind the need for an undemocratic institution to protect the property of the wealthy from the democratic masses. The Court's record of protecting those rights has been much more consistent than its protection of civil liberties. Before the Warren era, the Court used its powers to strike down any democratic legislation it disapproved of, including railroad rate regulation, populist income tax, maximum hour law, anti-child-labor law, and wage and hour laws.

But, after the Warren era, it has gone to the other extreme, and through "judicial restraint" has refused to overturn majority actions it approved of, even though they infringed on civil rights.

Which role is better for our secular church to take—to protect liberties from the majority, or to defer to the majority's every act? I agree with Taylor that the former is necessary. But, depending on the individual priests at the top, this role leads to ending rights as easily as giving them.

James Hall
Eugene, Ore.

Richard Taylor's article merely proves the disastrous misrule of unelected despots with little administrative ability or experience. Court-ordered school busing, for example, has wasted billions that could have been spent on education.

Taylor ignores the fact that the Constitution, unlike the Bible, contains a mech-

anism for its own amendment. Thus there is no excuse for judicial alteration.

Franklin said we would have a republic if we could keep it. Evidently we are failing to do so.

Majorities may err, despots are sometimes benign. But the lesson of history, on which the theory of democracy rests, is that, on balance, majority rule is safer.

John H. Foard Jr.
Kansas City, Mo.

Why I am not a Jew

David Dvorkin ("Why I am Not a Jew," Spring 1990) says the literature of disbelief bashes Christianity, but treats Judaism with kid gloves. He attributes this to the writers' wish not to seem anti-Semitic. While this may be a factor, he overlooks a more likely cause of the kid-glove treatment of Judaism compared to its spin-off religions. Whereas Christians and Muslims believe they have a duty to impose their strange ideas on everyone, the Jews are less ambitious. They only have a duty to impose their strange ideas on other Jews, and thus avoid antagonizing non-Jewish disbelievers.

Andrew Vicker
Scranton, Pa.

Bravo for the courageous article by David Dvorkin.

Why can't a person abandon his or her ancient mythological loyalties and be a member of the human community without any parochial commitment to ethnicity? Why can't a person appreciate equally Hellenic, Jewish, Chinese, French, African, and other contributions to culture without chauvinism?

Judith Wolfe
New York, N.Y.

David Dvorkin rejects Judaism emotionally, while many of the signers of the Humanist Manifesto, such as Joseph Blau, Mordecai Kaplan, and Sol Gordon, have been or are committed Jews.

For the Nazis it was not necessary to be a professing Jew in order to be incar-

cerated in a concentration camp; they imprisoned Catholic priests and Protestant ministers who had a Jewish grandmother or grandfather. It is not true, as Dvorkin believes, that most Jews consider the Holocaust a divine punishment, or see an anti-Semite automatically in every gentile. Great numbers of "righteous gentiles" saved Jewish families and children from destruction in countries overrun by the Nazis, risking their own lives to do so. Those kind people, Catholics, Protestants, and secularists, have not been forgotten by the Jewish community. Will Dvorkin, who is no longer a Jew, be able or willing to participate in Holocaust Remembrance Day memorials, to come to grips with this dark chapter in our history?

Heinz Hartmann, M.D.
Syracuse, N.Y.

I write as an atheist and secular humanist who never believed in any supernaturalist religion but who was born into a family identified as Jewish. I think that David Dvorkin is wrong, mainly by way of exaggeration, on several points.

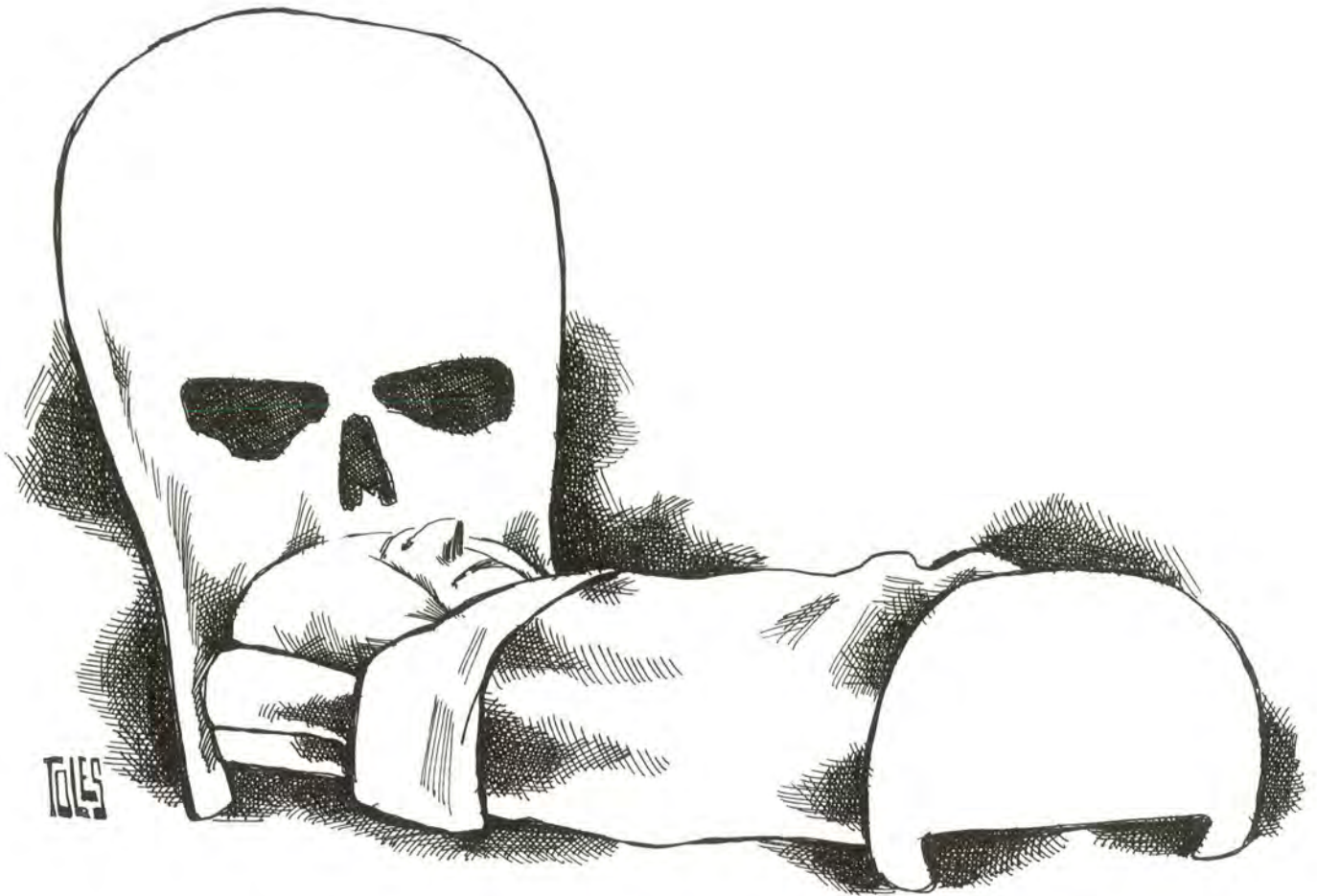
1. In most countries, Jews tend to marry more often with Jews than with non-Jews. This tends to make them, over several generations, slightly more like one another than they are like their neighbors. It does not make them a separate race but a distinctive group.

2. I think that Dvorkin is somewhat off the mark when he chides Jews for taking vicarious credit for the achievements of outstanding Jews: It is not a matter of basking in reflected glory. It is a perfectly proper ground for refuting those who hate Jews on racial grounds; we may say to them, "See here, if you insist on judging us as a race, then you must deal with the fact that, in nearly every field, there are many more Jews of outstanding achievement and contribution to society than is accounted for by our numbers in the society."

3. Dvorkin seems to contradict himself when, in one paragraph, he speaks of Jews as having a ghetto mentality that makes them think that they belong on the "bottom of the heap" and, in another paragraph, speaks of Jews as looking down upon "goyim" as brutish and lazy. I doubt that most of us take either extreme view. As for "anti-goyism" in general, I think that most of us who bear the label "Jew" have some justification for that.

4. Dvorkin is wrong about the low-key criticism of Judaism as a religion. The "Jewish Bible" gets plenty of derisive criticism, and deservedly so.

(Continued on p. 60)



Dying Without Religion

All human beings have to face the eventuality of their own death. But secularists, humanists, atheists, and agnostics are invariably repelled by traditional liturgies and religious ceremonies. This does not mean, however, that they should dispense with any kind of commemorative service, for a social process may help to ease the psychological trauma of death.

But there are many questions for secular humanists: How should I prepare for death? How should my body (or those of my loved ones) be disposed of? Should there be a funeral or a memorial service? Without some prior arrangements and instructions, the bereaved friends or family of the deceased nonbeliever may violate his or her wishes and resort to a traditional religious funeral at the last moment.

Therefore it is advisable that the secular humanist leave explicit instructions with a lawyer, executor, and a trusted friend or family member regarding his or her wishes.

Since the will is often read some time *after* burial or cremation, instructions should appear in a codicil that will be noticed prior to any such services. It should specify how the body is to be disposed of, whether organs will be donated, and whether there will be a public viewing of the remains.

It should also give precise details of the types of service, if any, the deceased would prefer. Many humanists prefer cremation and no public viewing of the body. They find that arranging a public memorial several weeks *after* death is most fitting. This can be at a secular humanist center, a funeral home, a university, a library, or another meeting place. Music may be performed or poetry read; refreshments may be made available; and relatives, friends, and colleagues may relate poignant or humorous experiences they shared with the deceased. This provides a dignified setting for a secular memorial whereupon one can commemorate a cherished friend or relative. Some families

like to publish the eulogies and remembrances delivered and distribute the booklet later to friends and relatives.

Perhaps the best procedure is to have fellow secular humanists and/or members of the family plan the memorial services and invite various speakers. If you would like assistance with this task, contact the chairperson of a secular humanist group near you (there are 23 in the United States and 10 in Canada). CODESH also maintains a list of Ethical Culture leaders, humanist counselors, and secular humanist Unitarian ministers who can help.

Two booklets are also available for use at the memorial service: Corliss Lamont's *A Humanist Funeral Service* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, \$5.95), and Jane Wynne Willson's *Funerals Without God: A Practical Guide*, published by the British Humanist Association and available for \$9.95 plus postage and handling from CODESH, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215. (P.K.)

A Eupraxophic Declaration On Death and Dying

Verle Muhrer

Death is a natural, not a supernatural phenomenon. It is a necessary component of all known forms of life on earth. It is to be understood and studied scientifically and naturally.

The hope and fear of rewards or punishments in the afterlife, in another life, or in a worldly reincarnation are contrary to the development of a realistic moral character and a healthy, ethical sense of justice.

The belief that the problem of death requires supernatural and religious solutions assumes that death itself is a supernatural phenomenon. It is not. No one is called from life to death by any supernatural forces. No god calls loved ones "home" because it is timely. Such claims made to the grieving are cruel and without a rational basis. Deaths are seldom timely and are nearly always too soon for the purpose of fulfillment of our life-goals.

All hope that death is not real and all hope for the afterlife is vain, immoral, perverse, and pathological.

No person claiming divine status has any special insights, by virtue of his or her claimed divine status, into the afterlife or reincarnation.

Neither life nor death is sacred or worthwhile for its own sake. The important question is, Which lives and which deaths are worthwhile and under what conditions? When Socrates said the unexamined life is not worth living, he clearly understood that there are humane preconditions necessary for the good life, two of which are rational inquiry and contemplation. Without these humane conditions present, we are indeed better off dead.

Death is not a punishment for human wrongdoing, nor

is it the "wages of sin." Such a myth can only serve to produce irrational guilt and inhuman, servile dependence on irrational theologies of salvation, saviors, and messiahs, resurrected and divine.

Certainly not all deaths are good. Death does have a very real sting that is painful to the living, but this cannot be altered by theological illusions of immortality and divine salvation or by mad and irrational beliefs in reincarnation. In addition, such beliefs serve to reinforce socially exploitative relationships justified by the lie of karma, which says that the downtrodden desire and earn their status in the here and now by the

Death is a natural phenomenon. To be eupraxophic is to master not only living but death as well. We must have the courage and understanding to face our own mortality.

deeds and thoughts of a previous life.

No person should be judged by the accident of an untimely death, any more than by the long-worn superstition of judging people by the accident of birth. Nor should the human race be judged as sinful because of the natural condition of dying.

The victory of the grave is no illusion. The grave is victorious. In the end, it always has its way. To believe otherwise is vain, unrealistically prideful, self-deluding, and arrogant.

To be eupraxophic is to master not only living but death as well. We must have the courage and understanding to face our own mortality, and the mortalities of our loved ones and friends. However, secular humanists and eupraxophers are naturally more calm and less concerned about death because they understand it. Our fear, pain, and grief are tempered by aesthetic contemplation, reason, and human, not divine, acts of kindness, love, mercy, and comfort.

No illusion is authentically comforting, least of all the illusion that death is unreal and unnatural. (Not *really* real, not *really* natural and final, as nonsecularists and theists persistently tell us.) It is due to moral illusions, moral depravities, and moral deficiencies that we accept death as punishment or reward for sins and virtues for any one individual or group of individuals or for the human race. Death is *not* the wages of sin for our deficiencies now or

Verle Muhrer is a philosophy instructor at Penn Valley Community College in Kansas City, Missouri.

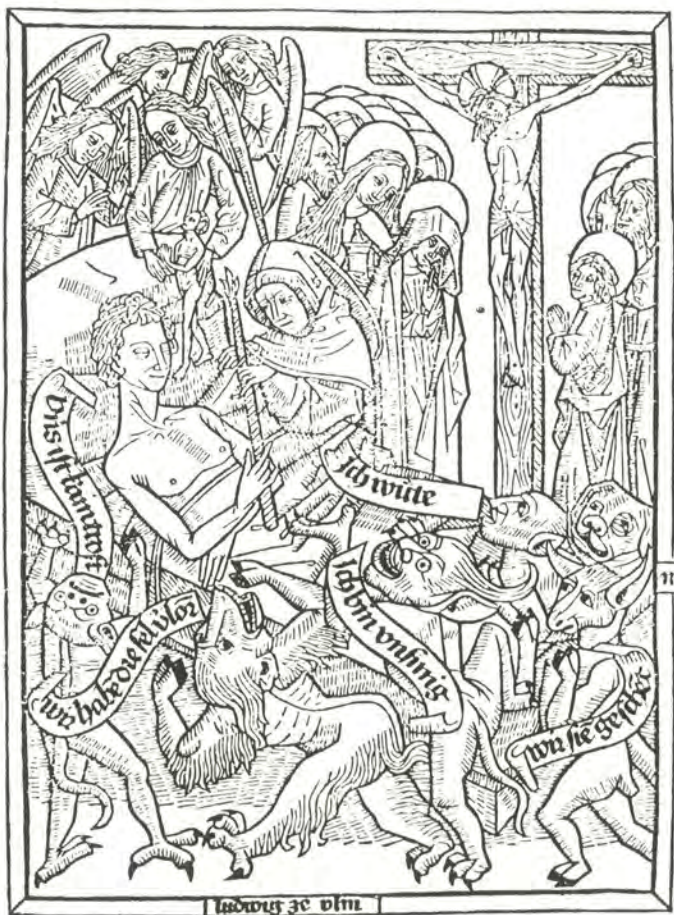


for the original sins of our mythical first parents in a garden of paradise, long lost and past.

Traditional religion's placement of the unreality of death as central is not dignified. The perverse and obscene dread of death by traditional religion is obsessive, morbid, and destructive to human fulfillment in this life.

A death without religion is a viable, moral, and ethical alternative to death with religion. We believe it to be superior. The history of humanistic alternatives to death in the grasp of religion is rich and full. Eupraxophers from Socrates to the present have lived without religion and their deaths have been rounded and meaningful completions of their lives. We wish no intrusions of religion into our dying and into the dying of our loved ones. We believe such intrusions to be an affront to our rights and our dignity.

No worldly government or authority has the right to call on men and women to fight, kill, and die in military battle in a supernatural cause blessed by military chaplains



Fifteenth-century German woodcut depicting "The Art of Dying Well." Used by the church as a "picture sermon," it illustrated the ideal of a death with religion. The monk is putting a lighted candle into the hand of dying man, whose soul leaves his mouth in the form of a praying figure received by a band of heavenly angels. The pious believer is turning his thoughts toward the crucified Jesus and assorted adoring saints as, in the foreground, various demons are in hellish consternation over the good man's escape from their clutches.

or by anyone else claiming divine status or instrumentality. Religion has prospered in large measure because its professional representatives claiming a divine status have cynically manipulated those saddened by dying and death into signing over their wealth. We strenuously oppose this manipulation, and call for its cessation.

Ministers, mullahs, rabbis, priests, holy men and women, and the clergy have no special prerogatives over and above secularists, eupraxophers, and humanists to comfort the dying or to conduct ceremonies for the dead by virtue of their claims to divine status, calling, or anointing, or as instruments of the supernatural.

It is the responsibility of eupraxophers and secular humanists to conduct appropriate ceremonies for the dead and to comfort and give solace to the living. Eupraxophers should seize the presumed exclusive prerogative of the religious professionals to conduct ceremonies and rituals for the dead and to comfort the living.

It is a basic human right and a matter of elemental human dignity to have an inalienable power to control our own dying by suicide, euthanasia, or whatever means at our disposal. No state or religion can or should impose life on those who no longer find it worth living.

We encourage the scientific investigation and objective inquiry into the processes of dying and extinction, their relation to the overall history of life on earth, and their relationship to an overall understanding of evolution of life forms. We encourage scientific examination of claims of reincarnation, trance-channeling, spiritualism, near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, discarnate spirits, ghosts, and all paranormal and religious claims capable of falsification or verification.

Given the present paucity of evidence for immortality, a carnate or discarnate afterlife, and a carnate rebirth in another body, we reject all claims of immortality as false and unproved based on hope and fear, not upon a healthy, rational life-stance.

We believe the care and compassionate support for the dying and the grief-stricken to be a paramount human responsibility. Appropriate secular and humanistic ceremonies should be conducted for the memory of what the dead stood for, lived for, loved for, and fought for. Such ceremonies are for the living and their purpose is not to invoke the supernatural and transcendent realm to provide better "accommodations" for the dead.

We respect the right of joyful irreverence toward dying as a human response to the old and hoary supernatural dreads. Religion's vain and puerile attempt to deny death and provide a supernatural solution to a natural problem must be not only criticized, but made an object of humor seasoned with pungent sympathies for its many unwary victims. Religion's clichés of death seem to us simplistic, cold, horrific, and pompous. Against these pretenses we encourage jocularity. We accept and mourn the grim ironies and ghastly pains of dying and, yes, the sting and victory of death.

We will that religion's death dread die, and that eupraxophic exuberance endure and prevail.

Saying Farewell Honestly

Daniel O'Hara

On the shortest day of the year just past, I took the train from Waterloo to Weymouth to attend the funeral of my last surviving uncle. Edward ("Dick") Dickenson was born in August 1903 in Peckham, an unsalubrious suburb of southeast London. By lying about his age he contrived to join the army in 1919. Remaining in the army after the armistice, he was stationed in Westchester, the home of three famous regiments, and there met, and in January 1928 married, my mother's younger sister, Edna.

After demobilization, he joined the Post Office as a telephone exchange supervisor, a job he continued to do (apart from the duration of World War II, when he served with distinction as a company sergeant-major in the Burma Campaigns) until taking early retirement in 1960 and moving with his wife to Weymouth to help their son and daughter-in-law run the boarding house they had recently taken over. After a while, he joined the Admiralty, and worked at Portland until his final retirement. Just two years ago, he and Edna celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary, and he remained in reasonable health for a man of his age until cancer took its toll.

Uncle Dick was not religious. As a soldier, he attended chapel every Sunday, regarding it as part of his duty and important for good discipline. But once out of the army, he never again darkened the doors of a church, unless it was for a rite of passage of a friend or relative.

His funeral, at Weymouth Crematorium, was conducted by the local vicar, who, with misplaced familiarity, referred to him as "Dicky." In the lessons from St. Paul, and in his short homily, we were pathetically assured that "Dicky" was now with God enjoying the life immortal. I was relieved for her sake that Aunt Edna was not well enough to attend the funeral, and I wondered what his son and daughter-in-law, his four grandchildren, and great-granddaughter made of the proceedings. I was particularly conscious that Weymouth's Municipal Crematorium still has a brass crucifix behind the catafalque, and a "holy" picture above. But it was the cant and hypocrisy of the funeral service from the Anglican Alternative Services Book that really disgusted me. The best I can hope is that it washed over the mourners like water over a duck's back. I was trying throughout to remember my uncle as the man with firm and definite opinions, but

always an appealing sense of humor, that I had known throughout my formative years. He was someone you couldn't help liking and respecting, even if you didn't always agree with him, as I rarely did on political issues. He was a devoted husband and father who went out of his way to provide as well as he possibly could for his family.

At the end of the service, I was too angry to speak or to shake hands with the parson, but I did beard the undertaker, and asked him whether the alternative of a secular funeral had been offered to the family. What, he asked, did I mean? Surely, I said, he had heard of the nonreligious funerals offered

The occasion must do justice to the real person. Uncle Dick deserved no less, and so do countless others whose final committal is marked by insincere obsequies steeped in fetid religiosity.

by the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society. Indeed he had, and even had copies of their booklets. But the practice, it seems, is to ask people what their religion is; and most people, unless they have a definite affiliation to another denomination, will say they are "C of E." Such, it seems, had been the response of Dick's family. The funeral had been arranged before I heard of the death, otherwise I might have suggested the secular alternative myself. But this undertaker, I suspect like most of his kind, will only offer the secular alternative if the deceased is specifically identified as an atheist.

I told the undertaker in no uncertain terms that he should not work on the assumption that everyone is religious until proved otherwise. In these days, because so few people have a definite religious allegiance, especially in the Church of England, he should rather work on the assumption that the deceased had no religion unless there was clear evidence to the contrary.

May I ask other readers to take similar action if ever they are in similar circumstances. Only in this way will those with no religious beliefs get an honest send-off that respects their dignity as unbelievers, pays proper regard to their real qualities and achievements, and sends the mourners away feeling that the occasion has done justice to the real person they knew, loved, and respected. Uncle Dick deserved no less, and so do countless others whose final committal is marked by insincere obsequies steeped in fetid religiosity. ●

Daniel O'Hara is a court welfare officer at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, and a freelance writer. This article is reprinted from the Freethinker, London, England, January 1990.

Let Thy Will Be Done

Eugene J. Daly

There is nothing wrong with having directions in your will that outline how you desire to be buried or how your physical remains are to be handled (that is, cremation, donation for scientific purposes, or some special service). *But be sure that someone you trust is aware of these directions.* It is especially important that individuals who choose cremation express this desire not only in the will but also to a friend or relative who is likely to be in the position to carry out these wishes. Probably this friend or relative is the executor. The will may not be discovered until after the family reconvenes from the burial at the cemetery. So, to repeat, share your thoughts with a person close to you, and do it now.

At the time your will is drawn (better still, do it today), find out if there is a family cemetery plot; if so, find out who has the deed and who is to be buried there. Families often find themselves searching for the deed when a relative dies. Usually the deed is located, but even if it cannot be found, the problem will eventually be resolved. The name of the cemetery is remembered, the cemetery finds its record of the plot location and identifies the owner, who then gives consent to the burial. But it is something that should not be left to the last minute; this is a time when family and friends should not be forced to undergo additional stress.

You may decide to have parts of your body used as anatomical gifts, or your entire body used for medical research. Eye banks, hospitals that perform organ transplants, and medical schools are frequently in need of these gifts. Many states have a section on driver's licenses where residents can express their desire to donate one or more parts or their entire body for medical purposes.

Be sure to leave directions if there is not to be a traditional

funeral. Perhaps your preference is a memorial service. Opinion is mixed as to which of these offers the greater benefit to survivors. Some people are of the opinion that viewing the body is important, because it forces survivors to accept the death of a loved one. Others prefer a memorial service after the burial or cremation, because the body is no longer as important as the type of life that was led. These are not pleasant thoughts, but if your survivors know your wishes, the emotional stress on them can be significantly reduced.

You have the right to decide the manner in which your death is treated. But be sure that someone you trust is aware of your wishes. Family and friends should not be forced to undergo additional stress.

You have the right to decide the manner in which your body is to be disposed of. Put these instructions in your will and tell your decision to your executor (and perhaps another trusted person). When this has been done, you do not have to think further on the subject. At your death, the person to whom you have confided this information will follow your instructions.

To the person making the funeral arrangements: *be a smart shopper.* Never waste money; more important, never waste someone else's money! This someone else is the residuary legatee, whose legacy is decreased by the amount spent on the funeral (and who might advise the executor not to reimburse the person who orchestrated and paid for the lavish sendoff of the deceased). Avoid the urge to go overboard; it is a meaningless effort to use a funeral to show the deceased the extent of your love. If you are too confused or miserable to make wise choices, then ask someone to make these choices for you.

Now a few words on planning for yourself. The least expensive alternative regarding body disposal is cremation with a memorial service. The expenses of embalming and renting a room in the funeral home are eliminated. Also there is no need for the purchase of an expensive casket or a gravestone. But it is your decision. Whatever you decide, state your decision in your will and advise your executor accordingly.

Suppose you change your mind after the will has been signed. *Do not make a change on your will.* Instead, have a new will drawn up or have a codicil prepared. ●

*Eugene J. Daly is an attorney practicing in New York City. This article is excerpted from his book *Thy Will Be Done* (Prometheus).*



Roger L. Brown

Making the Best of the Worst

John Buchanan

Although dying is no joke, a death that is anticipated and planned for is much easier to deal with than the other kind. It's not uncommon, of course, for plans to be made when a person is terminally ill. It's less-common-to-rare to find healthy middle-aged people who have given thought to their ultimate demise.

Yet about a half million souls in the United States and Canada have not only faced the fact that they will some day (*any* day) depart this earth, they have made precise plans concerning what should be done when they die. Who are these people? They are members of funeral or memorial societies affiliated with either the Continental Association of Funeral and Memorial Societies or the Memorial Society Association of Canada.

Dating from the 1930s (the largest U.S. society was formed in 1939 in Seattle, Washington), these nonprofit societies were formed in protest to funeral-industry practices considered by many to be garish, undignified, and calculated to plunder the pocketbook of the dazed-by-grief customer. Two books published in 1963, Jessica Mitford's *The American Way of Death* and Ruth Harmer's *The High Cost of Dying*, threw the glaring light of publicity on the death business. The result was broad consumer recognition of the problem and a strong movement to start the nonprofit societies that would educate members of the public in ways to protect themselves.

By 1963 enough societies had been formed that representatives met in Chicago and started the Continental Association, which then coordinated the activities of both American and Canadian societies. In 1971 the Canadian societies split off in their national group. Societies in both countries now number about two hundred.

Founders of the Neptune Society, a profit-making business, saw opportunity in the idea of no-frills funerals and no harm in associating themselves with the growing popularity of the nonprofit groups. Skillful marketing and a canny ability to publicize have made financial successes of this and other copycat firms. The nonprofits have managed consistently to offer more for less to their members.

In the 1970s concern over funeral-industry abuses reached the point where the U.S. government became involved. Early efforts by organizers of the nonprofit societies were often thwarted. Some morticians saw Communist influence in that effort. After all, these people were carrying on a nonprofit,

maybe even socialist enterprise. And, obviously, the institution of profit was coming under attack. It was not uncommon in those days for a person seeking a modestly priced funeral to suffer decidedly uncivil treatment at the hands of their chosen mortician. If interest were shown in buying the least expensive casket offered, the buyer might be met with, "You wouldn't bury your dear mother in *that*, would you?"

Memorial societies were formed to protest funeral-industry practices considered garish, undignified, and calculated to plunder the pocketbook of the dazed-by-grief customer.

After congressional hearings and heavy debate in Congress, a Funeral Rule was promulgated by the Federal Trade Commission. The rule went into effect in 1984 and required funeral merchants to give prices both on the phone and in the form of lists. It enjoined morticians from claiming that caskets and embalming were required by law, except in rare cases; it forbade requiring purchase of a casket in the case of cremation, and prohibited claims that caskets would preserve a body.

The new rule helped the societies to publicize prices offered by mortuaries in their areas, giving the public a better chance to shop successfully. Recently, a list of the prices paid by morticians for the caskets they sell was published by the Continental Association. This list exposed the high prices charged buyers, averaging 2½ times the cost. Some mortuaries asked as much as ten times the cost for certain models.

Surveys conducted by the societies revealed that prices for identical funeral goods and services vary widely within a marketing area. A direct cremation, which involves simply picking up a body, getting a permit to cremate and having the death certificate signed, then taking the body to the crematory, can cost from \$395 to \$850 in a typical county in Southern California. Embalming costs \$105 at one mortuary, \$220 at another, and if the death resulted from a "communicable disease," five of sixteen mortuaries informally surveyed charged from \$50 to \$400 extra. It is reasonable to believe the others don't charge extra because they assume all bodies may carry contagious infections, and treat them accordingly. And who really knows what a person died from unless an autopsy is performed.

Generally high prices charged by funeral parlors all over the country are probably accounted for in part by their far-

John Buchanan is president of the Continental Association of Funeral and Memorial Societies.

beyond-need numbers. It is estimated that the two million deaths that occur each year in the United States could be accommodated by about one-tenth of the 20,000 currently extant mortuaries. More than half of these must exist on one or two cases a week. The result is that the families served by the marginal firms must pay exorbitantly to keep the provider in business, while those patronizing mortuaries with high caseloads pay similarly high prices but also make Jaguars and BMWs possible for the businesspersons involved.

Recent events in the funeral industry may result in a significant reduction in the number of firms involved. Service Corporation International (SCI), only one of several conglomerates in the business, now owns over five hundred mortuaries. These used to be family-owned operations, and even under SCI ownership still use the original names.

A hot item with the conglomerates these days—and with many an “independent” mortician—is the funeral purchased before need. In most cases it is unwise to pay in advance for a funeral. If a person wants to be sure funds are available upon death, money dedicated for payment of a funeral should be put into an interest-bearing account at a savings institution. This guarantees that the money will be available, with interest, in sufficient amount to pay the bill when needed. Money paid to a mortician for this purpose could and has gone astray.

A shortcoming in the FTC effort was inadequate publicity related to the Funeral Rule. Money for publicizing the rule was lacking from the beginning, but when recent political forces began cutting back on funds for social services, very little was done to let the public know of the restrictions placed on the funeral business. Relief unknown is pitifully little relief.

Membership in the nonprofit memorial or funeral societies is open on a nondiscriminatory basis to all at minimal cost. The societies sign agreements with established mortuaries that promise to provide at a discount services desired by the members. The mortuary also pledges not to attempt to “sell” goods or services not asked for by the member. Societies agree to offer their services to traveling members of other societies, and memberships are transferable at little or no cost.

The Continental Association and the autonomous societies are governed by an elected board of directors. They attempt to keep their members informed concerning legal and other developments in the area of death, dying, and final disposition of the human body. A directory of the societies in the United States and Canada is available free. The association would welcome the opportunity to work with anyone wanting to start a new society in an area not now served. Write 7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 1208, Bethesda, Maryland 20814-3015 and include a stamped self-addressed business size envelope.

In the Event of my Death: Instructions on Burial and Memorial.

I, _____, hereby declare that the following instructions be followed at the time of my death.

- ☐ I wish my body to be disposed of by: ☐ Cremation ☐ Burial
- ☐ I do **not** wish any religious ceremony or service to be performed.
- ☐ I do **not** wish my body to viewed. ☐ I do wish my body to be viewed.
- ☐ I would like a simple memorial service to be carried out several weeks after my death, at which time music and poetry may be performed and testaments (if any) given. There shall be **no** religious references.
- ☐ More specific instructions are in an envelope in _____ addressed to _____ (location)
- ☐ An organ donor card will be found in my wallet.

Copy to: ☐ Executor _____ (name)

☐ Funeral Director _____

☐ Family Physician _____

☐ Lawyer _____

☐ Other (relative) _____

(Signed)

(Date)

(Notarized)

(Date)

Theological Mythologies and Naturalistic Certitude

Delos B. McKown

In that curious and little-known work, *Analysis of the Influences of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind*, Jeremy Bentham defined religion as "belief in the existence of an almighty Being, by whom pains and pleasures will be dispensed to mankind, during an infinite and future state of existence." Although this definition may not win the endorsement of all informed parties, it surely encapsulates much in traditional, orthodox Christianity. Bentham's object was to ascertain whether belief in posthumous pains and pleasures, to be administered by an omnipotent being, is productive of happiness or misery in the present life. With remorseless logic he proceeded to show that such a being, accountable to none morally and quite possibly quixotic in temperament, must be to us a holy terror.

It is not for nothing that we in the Christian West have been induced to face death with dread and the "final judgment" with fear and trembling. When taken seriously, thoughts of falling into the hands of an angry God able to deal out hell, fire, and endless damnation can hardly produce happiness. Indeed, how can religion so defined not be intolerable? To the diseases, disasters, and destruction of this life; to its frustrations, failures, and futility; its pains, penalties, and promises denied, one can only say, "All this and hell to boot!" Religion, of course, can hardly rest content with this as the final word.

Without denying such a portrayal, Christianity quickly paints a different picture. Though transcendent and awesomely mysterious, God has, happily, revealed his character to us. Omnipotent and accountable to none, he is by nature, nevertheless, lovingly disposed toward humankind. We are, in fact, the very apple of his cosmic eye. He made the whole world just for us and gave us power and dominion over it

and all its creatures. Best of all, he wants us to be happy here and hereafter. When, through the misuse of free will, our first parents transgressed against God, leaving us, their progeny, depraved, he sent his only son to die atoningly for our sins. The good news of the Gospel, we are assured, is epitomized in the Sunday-school ditty, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." Thus are the works of Satan, the remorseless logic of Bentham, and the threat of hell overcome theologically. But how decisive is a theological victory?

The Christian message of redemption is most welcome to multitudes of people, because it fits hand in glove with our species-pride, our need for self-esteem, our inclination to

Untroubled by vain threats of contending mythologies, humanists know that now is the time to live and this is the world in which to love, create, achieve, and enjoy.

wishful thinking, and our optimism that though hell may be for others, it is not really an option for us; that in our own special, individual cases extenuating circumstances will conveniently be found; that eventually all will be well with us and with those who mean most to us. Buoyed by such happy attitudes and agreeable beliefs, millions of people feel quite secure, no doubt, when facing death. They merely wink at the potential danger, foreseen by Bentham, of falling into the clutches of an omnipotent, inscrutable, *irresponsible* deity, or simply pooh-pooh the idea of confronting one who is omnipotent, holy, and just, but *not necessarily merciful*.

Focusing for a time on people who are still bewitched by the Bible and enthralled by its storybook account of the world and of human life, let us ask a few questions. What of those who take indictments of their depravity more seriously than assurances and reassurance of their redemption? Put differently, what of the unnumbered children who, while being socialized, are threatened by supernatural sanctions and grow up guilt-ridden? What of those who when measured against impossibly high standards believe themselves to be no good, who become depressed about themselves because they perennially fail to become what they are supposed to be? The "saved of earth" who "know Jesus" will glibly say of these wretches that they just need to know Jesus and get saved.

Delos B. McKown is chairman of the Philosophy Department at Auburn University and a contributing editor of FREE INQUIRY.



But, alas, the churches are full of people who know the words of salvation (and say them often) but who have never *felt* their significance. Many churchgoers have never had a religious experience, have never felt that cleansing of the inward parts that faith is supposed to accomplish, and have no abiding assurance of their redemption. Granted that one of the functions of religion is to reduce anxieties associated with death, what of the occasions when it fails? Not expecting salvation anyway, such failures leave secular humanists undisturbed and at peace with themselves.

If, as most humanists believe, we shall all be after death precisely what we were before conception, namely, nothing at all, then those who claim to be saved will, of course, never know that they are not. At best they can know only transient experiences of forgiveness, temporal reductions in their anxieties relative to death and to the final judgment of their worst imaginings. To say that this is all is not to downplay the significance of feeling oneself to be forgiven for one's very being (in the case of orthodox Christians) and for the bad actions of a lifetime. Studies in the history and phenomenology of religion show beyond doubt that hordes of people will go to extreme lengths to find cleansing, forgiveness, and assurances of eternal safety. They will also strive to secure these benisons for their loved ones.

But the price can be high. To possess such blithe beliefs and happy expectations, one must enter the fabulous world of faith, the storybook world of religion. Once in that make-believe realm the believer may be called on frequently to defend its reality against the often less-than-supportive world of daily experience. One may also have to give up one's intellectual

integrity to the authority of others and become dogmatic in the presence of reason. Concomitantly, doubts will likely dog one's tracks, at least occasionally, often to be followed by guilt due to the doubting itself and anxiety over one's flirtations with faithlessness.

It would be absurd to claim that the pains of dying are less painful to secular humanists than to theists of whatever stripe, or to fancy that the sundering of loving relationships by death is easier on the former than on the latter. Unlike orthodox Christians, however, humanists feel no guilt for being here, for being alive, for being human. Moreover, we have reconciled ourselves to the idea that the only genuine forgiveness there can be is the forgiveness of those who have been harmed by us and, secondarily, by those who love us despite our mistakes and failures. We seek no divine forgiveness and expect none, nor does its absence in our lives leave us stewing in guilt or anxiety. Experience indicates that such self-esteem as we may enjoy can come only from our own achievements and the regard of those who matter most to us.

Death, to the secular humanist, is a case of having ceased to be. Having ceased to be is tantamount to having ceased to care, having ceased to hope or to be disappointed, having ceased to fear. Seen in this way, the contemplation of being dead can hardly be more distressing than the contemplation of not yet being conceived, of not yet being conscious. Few there be who suffer over not yet having been before they began to be. Thus, although dying may hurt a lot, though the irrevocable loss of loved ones may hurt excruciatingly, *being* dead does not hurt, even a little.

Accepting the one-way flight of time's arrow and taking a naturalistic view of our beginning to be and our ceasing to be, we refrain from poetizing our existence euphemistically and from transmuting this poetry into dogma via religious authority, hopeful mystery, and the dubious certitudes of faith. Not subscribing to stories of a personal deity or of our alleged creation and rumored fall, redemption, and resurrection, we waste no time defending theological fictions against experienced facts. Nor can doubts assail us as they assail the faithful. Even if the universe is an artifact, what power could its artificer exercise over the dead?

Those who are equally fearful and faithful will likely contend that we all have souls that will live beyond the death of our bodies and will receive divine justice. However, to claim that we all have souls, in addition to the substance and functions of our bodies, is to beg the question or (what is precisely the same) to espouse an article of faith, not knowing that articles of faith do not become true just by being believed, even fervently. Moreover, though hell may be understandable psychologically as the creation of all who yearn for ultimate justice, it also appears equally to have been created out of the animosity believers feel for unbelievers. Thus have religions all too often struggled with their rivals, dealing out damnation for so insignificant an offense as unbelief.

Untroubled by the vain threats of contending mythologies, secular humanists remain assured that here is the place to effect justice, that now is the time to live, that this is the world in which to love, to create, to achieve, and to enjoy—and in no other.

Help Further the Cause of Humanism.

Please remember **FREE INQUIRY** in your will.

Won't you consider making a provision in your will for **FREE INQUIRY** and the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism? This will ensure vital support for the defense and development of humanism.

Although humanists do not believe in immortality, they know that the good work they do will survive them. By leaving a percentage of your estate to **FREE INQUIRY (CODESH, INC.)**, you will be furthering the ideals of humanism.

We would be happy to work with you and your attorney in the development of a will or estate plan that meets your wishes.

Besides a will, there are many other possibilities, such as living trusts and charitable gift annuities from which you receive an annual income from the transfer of property now. Or you might make a contingent bequest, by which **FREE INQUIRY (CODESH, INC.)** will receive a gift only if your primary beneficiaries do not survive you.

For more information, contact Paul Kurtz, Editor of **FREE INQUIRY**.

**P.O. Box 5 • Central Park Station
Buffalo, New York 14215 • 716-834-2921**

All inquiries will be held in the strictest confidence.

O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?

Tim Madigan

Dear Lovely Death
That taketh all things under wing—
Never to kill—
Only to change
Into some other thing
This suffering flesh,
To make it either more or less,
Yet not again the same—
Dear Lovely Death,
Change is thy other name.

—Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes's poem expresses a moving acceptance of the naturalness of death. Unfortunately, not all of us can look upon death with such insouciance. The illusion of immortality has long proved to be a source of comfort for individuals who do not accept the notion of personal annihilation. Only through the hope for eternal life can they find meaning. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption," writes Paul of Tarsus, "and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Most humanists beg to differ with this view. Death cannot be overcome. At best, it can be accepted. As Verle Muhrer so eloquently puts it, "Death stings like hell." It ends our earthly plans, it limits our possibilities, and, in the case of the loss of a loved one, it can paralyze us with grief. While humanists accept that death is natural and final, they are not like the ancient stoics, who scorned all emotions and declared bereavement to be a waste of time. Anaxagoras, the stoic philosopher, on being told that his son had been killed in battle, calmly announced that "I never supposed that I had begotten an immortal." What the stoics overlooked is that though death is a natural occurrence, so too is grief. To mourn the demise of a cherished relative or friend is a normal thing to do (although some people—like Queen Victoria, who pined over her husband's memory for longer than the two had been married—take the grieving process a bit too far). As that most existential book of the Bible, Ecclesiastes, says, "To everything there is a season, a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." But Ecclesiastes also states that "A live dog is better than a dead lion." Grieve for what is gone, but also appreciate what is still alive and kicking.

Many nonhumanists cannot believe that there are those

who can look toward their own demise without qualms or trepidation. Apocryphal stories abound about atheists and heretics recanting their views on their deathbeds. Robert Ingersoll once offered the sum of \$1,000 in gold to anyone who could prove that Thomas Paine had converted to Christianity in his final hours. The money went uncollected, but this didn't stop the fundamentalists from spreading rumors that *Ingersoll* underwent a deathbed conversion! The whole notion of such last-minute bargaining is itself absurd. Denis Diderot, in his *Dialogue on Religion*, has an atheist character reply in this way to the charge that he will become religious in his final moments: "I can answer for nothing when my brain has softened. But if I end with one of those illnesses which leave the dying man in possession of his powers, I shall be no more distressed at the expected moment than I am now." And the Irish playwright Brendan Behan cheerfully announced to all the world, as he went about leading his blasphemous existence, that he was a deathbed Catholic.

While the evidence for personal immortality is highly dubious (saints and spirits notwithstanding), there are a few ways in which one can, in a sense, live on past death. The achievements of a scant few will allow their names to be remembered long after they cease to exist. But there is no guarantee this will be so. Fame is fleeting. Consider the case of Erastratus, who burnt down the Temple of Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, solely so that his name would be remembered for all time. Today his name is known only to pedants like myself (and even I had to look it up for verification). Perhaps we'd be better off following the adage of the old Billie Holiday song—"Please don't talk about me when I'm gone."

Another way in which we can have influence beyond the grave is one that was not available to previous generations: we can donate our organs, to help the living who are in desperate need of transplantation. The chief opponents to organ transplants have always been religious-minded individuals, who hold that it is undignified to cut up a body and remove its usable parts. But where is the dignity in embalming a corpse, putting on its Sunday Best, crating it up, and holing it in the ground? A true case of all-dressed-up-and-no-place-to-go. Since we humanists aren't expecting to be raptured, and therefore won't have much need for our bodies once we cease to be, we should consider making available to the needy those parts that are still useful. There are never enough donors for corneas, kidneys, bone marrow, livers, and other organs. To benefit the living after you have died—if that is not dignity, I don't know what is. Many states

Tim Madigan is executive editor of FREE INQUIRY.

allow you to note on your driver's license that you wish to make an anatomical gift effective upon your death. It is also advisable to carry a "Uniform Donor Card" like the one below, and to alert friends and relatives to your wishes on this matter. After all, you won't be able to carry them out yourself.

Perhaps the most important way in which we can metaphorically live on past our deaths is through the influence we have on others. We are social creatures, and our actions have consequences. Who among us cannot remember a special teacher, who encouraged us when we were young and influenced our career choice? And who among us cannot remember a rotten teacher, who discouraged us when we asked impertinent questions, and took the joy of learning away from us? Our influence may not be noted in history books, or even

in family recollections, but its is very real, and it is up to us to see to it that it is positive.

That death limits our potential is nothing to fret about. What exactly would limitless possibilities be like, anyway? For humanists, the quest for the good life always involves a proper understanding that death may come at any time. ("Like a thief in the night," if I may once again quote from a nonhumanist source.) We do not need the desire for immortality—heaven, reincarnation, spiritualism, eternal recurrence, cryonics, or any other permutation—to give meaning to our existence. Life is for living, and the joys available are sweet indeed. That they are not undying makes them that much more precious. Nowhere is this better expressed than in Andrew Marvell's "immortal" poem, "To His Coy Mistress":

UNIFORM DONOR CARD

OF _____

Print or Type name of donor

In the hope that I may help others, I hereby make this anatomical gift, if medically acceptable, to take effect upon my death. The words and marks below indicate my desires.

I give (a) _____ any organ(s) or part(s)

(b) _____ only the following organs or parts

Specify the organ(s) or part(s)

for the purposes of transplantation, therapy, medical research or education.

(c) _____ my body for anatomical study if needed

Limitations or

special wishes, if any _____

The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Festivals and Transitions

Vern Bullough

Human transitions and ceremonies associated with important events are something that humanists as a general rule do not do very well. One reason for this is that most such celebrations in our society traditionally have been associated with religion. It is religion that usually accepts the infant into the community either through a baptism or a naming ceremony, and it is religion that marks the development of life through baptisms, bar or bas mitzvahs, engagements, marriages, and funerals. Except for a few secular holidays, most holidays in America (and elsewhere) have a religious connotation: Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, Passover, Memorial Day, Yom Kippur, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Ramadan, and so on.

Some humanists manage to ignore the religious conno-

tations of these events and celebrate them in their own way. Others, however, either refuse to recognize the importance of such events or in other ways simply endure them. I believe we should accept all these events and develop a humanist response to them, since they are much too important to ignore. What such events do is consolidate relationships, mark passages, create family solidarity, and give emotional support. Even if we try to ignore their importance, our children growing up in a world where such things are celebrated usually want to be part of the group, and many of them end up celebrating religious holidays in ways distasteful to their humanist parents.

Let me document their importance with some historical examples. Perhaps the best place to begin is with the French Revolution, which tried to do away with old superstition and establish a new era of rationalism. In their eagerness to replace the old order, the revolutionaries established a whole new list of festive occasions and ceremonies celebrating birth, youth, age, and harvest to replace the traditional religious

Vern L. Bullough is SUNY distinguished professor and senior editor of FREE INQUIRY.

ones. Months were renamed and so were the days of the week. A new age was proclaimed with a civic liturgy replacing the religious. Yet these revolutionary ceremonials soon disappeared, and in the words of one cynical historian, none of them were able to displace a single village saint. Gradually some of the new republican symbolism worked its way into authentic French tradition, but it never survived in a pure form. Thomas Carlyle once remarked in his curmudgeonly way that "Not by outbursts of noble sentiment, but with far other ammunition, shall a man [or woman] front the world." This has always meant to me that sentiments are one thing, reality is another, and to confront reality requires dealing with it and not ignoring it.

Religious holidays themselves are a good example of the failure of things to change. There is nothing about Christmas, for example, that is Christian except the name, and this is more or less deliberate. After several centuries of trying to ignore the pagan holidays associated with the winter solstice and the beginning of the new year, the Christians simply Christianized them by proclaiming December 25 the birthday of Jesus. Though statistical probabilities would indicate that there is one chance in 365 that Jesus was born on December 25, the one thing that historians are certain about is that December 25 was not the birthday of Jesus if the Christian New Testament has any historical value at all. Though periodically some devout Christians try to reestablish Christmas as a Christian holiday by purging it of all its pagan and pre-Christian elements, they have proved no more successful than the early Christians. Jews had particular difficulty with the holiday if only because of its name, and countered by elevating a minor religious holiday, Hanukkah, to a more significant status. The result in many families is to celebrate not only Hanukkah, but Christmas as well. Christmas simply is an extra day of Hanukkah, somewhat delayed. The Druid Christmas tree becomes the Hanukkah bush, and so on. Though the attempt is complicated by the Jewish calendar, Jews are simply doing what Christians did, making a festival day their own. Christmas is perhaps the most difficult of festival days. Most of the others pose fewer problems since even Christians have forgotten their meaning. Valentine's Day, for example, bears the name of a Christian saint, but that is the only thing that is Christian about it and only the most devout remember this. Passover remains more religious than Easter, perhaps because it is the religious holiday of a minority. Even though Easter is regarded as the most important day in the Christian church calendar, most of the ceremonies associated with it in the popular tradition—from the Easter basket to the Easter bunny—are carryovers from pre-Christian cults. Even its name commemorates a pre-Christian spring festival. Memorial Day might have started out as a day of prayer and commemoration, but to most it has become just part of another three-day holiday weekend, commemorated mainly by the Indianapolis 500. Yom Kippur, like Passover, remains a religious holiday, simply because it has become a way of keeping Jewish identity, and it has not entered into the American mainstream with the pressure to conform that such holidays demand. It is, however, a major problem for humanists of Jewish background who have to

develop means to cope if they want to keep their identity as Jews. Sherwin Wine and the Humanistic Judaism movement have developed uniquely humanist ways to mark such occasions. Halloween has totally reverted to a pagan holiday with ghosts, goblins, and transvestites everywhere. Thanksgiving started out as a day of prayer and thanks, and though every American schoolchild learns about the first Thanksgiving Day, it has become more of a harvest festival, although somewhat delayed. Alone among the American holidays it has remained a true feast day, the original meaning of festival.

By accepting pagan holidays and feastdays and putting them on the Christian calendar, usually under a Christian name, Christianity made them its own, although the ceremonies associated with them never became truly Christian. Humanists have as much right to the holidays as do Christians (or Jews or Muslims or others). All we need to do is rename them. Some humanists have started to do so by proclaiming January 1 as World Humanist Day. Everyone celebrates it anyway but now there is a purpose to it. Since Christmas started out as a combination of the winter solstice and a new-year festival, all we are doing is separating the two, making New Year's Day our own. Obviously we can celebrate it by bringing our families together to watch the bowl games, proclaiming such events uniquely humanist. Though this is facetious, it is through adopting such events that the Christians made them their own. Those of us who are not avid sports fans can begin to develop alternative ceremonies. We have the advantage that the new year is already celebrated with a public holiday in the United States and in many other parts of the world.

It is not enough, however, to deal with public festivals; humanists also have to mark transitions during their own lives. These are mostly associated with birth, coming of age, marriage, and death. It is these commemorations—particularly those marking the finitudes of birth and death—that have been the mainstay of religion. Humanists have begun to deal with death through memorial services, but in general have ignored the other commemorations and transitions. We need to develop ceremonies that have some basis in popular belief to make them effective and to make such transitions meaningful to us and acceptable to our children. Russian brides in Moscow, for example, leave their wedding bouquets at Lenin's tomb, and the government encourages this by allowing brides and grooms to avoid the long wait that everyone has to go through to approach the tomb. What Lenin's tomb has to do with marriage is not entirely clear but perhaps it is appropriate to note that a civic deity has replaced a religious one. Moreover thousands of people see the bride and groom, comment upon them, and give them a brief moment of attention, which after all is one of the functions of marking transitions in life. What humanists do about transitions and festivals is in a sense unimportant; the important thing is to do something that manages to incorporate tradition but that can be interpreted in a uniquely humanist way. Festivities have been the wellspring and bulwark of religion. There is no reason why humanists, whether secular or religious, should not have their own. ●

Defining—and Implementing— Eupraxophy

Tom Flynn

Self-definition poses special problems for the secular humanist. To admit being one invites a barrage of questions. “Does that mean you are an atheist, an agnostic, or a rationalist?” the questions run. “You’re one of those materialists, aren’t you? Or are you a pragmatist?”

Many humanists could correctly answer all those questions “yes”; after all, each term addresses a different sphere of interest. But even if I say that I *am* an atheist *and* an agnostic *and* a rationalist *and* an adherent of the scientific method, and all the rest, I will fail to capture what I mean when I say simply, “I am a secular humanist.”

Paul Kurtz has advanced the concept of *eupraxophy* to describe secular humanism. A eupraxophy is neither a religion nor a philosophy, but rather a total stance toward life that combines a cosmic outlook with a code for vibrant, ethical living. It does this in the context of the scientific world view, and with a large dose of the zest for life in this world.

Defining secular humanism as a eupraxophy represents a significant step forward, for it gives us a vocabulary with which to define our shared commitment in a way that can engage the imagination as well as the mind. What does it mean to say that secular humanism is a eupraxophy? What do we gain by saying this that we lose by using any—or all—of those other labels?

It’s instructive to consider what traditional labels say about us as humanists, and what they leave unsaid. Since I am my most convenient guinea pig, I will demonstrate how those well-worn labels apply to me.

I am a secular humanist. Does that mean I am an atheist? Yes; “atheism” fairly describes my position on religious issues. I call myself an atheist because I reject all the purposeful, often personal cosmic landscapes that human speculation so far has painted. It is not that I reject the idea of the transcendent out of hand; it is simply that insufficient evidence exists for accepting any particular account of a universe beyond

the one we know. I can account for the world of experience well enough without accepting any of the dubious deities the world’s religions have set before me.

For the same reasons I am a materialist. “Materialist” describes my approach to metaphysics as aptly as “atheist” describes my approach to religion.

My secular humanism also makes me a rationalist; that is my philosophy of human nature. I believe that reason is the highest faculty humans possess, the sextant most likely to guide us toward successful behavior. I’m no starry-eyed advocate of the “religion of humanity,” content in some rosy faith that human triumph is inevitable. My world view admits the possibility that evolution may return a negative verdict on *homo Sapiens*. The best we can do may fall short of being good enough; still, I believe that if humanity should prevail, it will be because of reason.

Does my secular humanism make me an agnostic? Yes, that too. “Wait a minute,” I hear someone saying. “I thought you just said you were an atheist.” Well, I am, where religion is concerned. But I am also agnostic—that word describes my epistemological stance: my philosophy of knowledge. I am keenly aware of the limits of human awareness. Proud as we are of our hard-won wisdom, we can never be sure how much of it is wrong; science teaches no harsher lesson than this. And if it’s difficult to know when we are wrong, it’s harder still to be sure when we are *right*. In the world of experience, it is also more dangerous. Epistemic humility seems the wiser course; we should demand the most compelling of evidence before we impose our judgment on others.

Because I am a secular humanist, I am also a *pragmatist*: that is my ethical stance. No other morality presumes so little and is so open to corrective feedback from the outside world. When persons of good will cannot agree what is right, they can still share in observing what works. And over the centuries, pragmatic experience has demonstrated the existence of a few firm moral verities, the “common decencies” cited by Kurtz. These create a platform on which it is possible to build a humane yet rational ethics without either supernatural content or

ecclesiastical sanction.

Finally, because I am a secular humanist, I am a supporter of democracy and freedom. I am too aware of the limits of knowledge to dream that any centralized bureaucracy can guide society better than the men and women who live in it. The quest for bountiful living is better served by a great number of small personal experiments than by a few very large collective ones.

That is my path to secular humanism, and it is shared by many other humanists. I do not suggest, however, that this is the only authentic one. Instead, my point in this recitation was to show that accounting for myself religiously, philosophically, epistemologically, ethically, and even politically failed to touch the core of what I am as a secular humanist.

Secular humanism is more than a philosophical position. It is a commitment of the heart and imagination too. Our humanism may be deeply rooted in respect for the methods of science, but it also expresses the way we respond to the universe as whole personalities. And that is the way we have to begin presenting our way of life in the marketplace of ideas if we want to cast a larger shadow in the world; not as a pedantic montage of positions on theology, philosophy, or ethics, but as a rich and satisfying way of living life.

To use another of Kurtz’s terms, we need to include the *exuberance* inherent in humanistic living each time we make an account of ourselves.

It *feels good* to live without religion, to encounter the world each day knowing that no one is ultimately responsible for one’s fortunes in life but oneself. If this knowledge is sometimes frightening, it also makes possible the triumphs of overcoming existential despair and forging our own reasons for being here.

We are recognizing the need to communicate the exuberance of secular humanism alongside the philosophic inquiry that has long been our mainstay. And we are experimenting with new ways to organize ourselves in order to help more of our fellow men and women see secular humanism as a more broadly rewarding experience.

To that end, we have also recognized the need for a new vocabulary. The old categories of religion or philosophy or ethics were too confining. With the word *eupraxophy* we have staked a claim to new ground that is ours and ours alone.

What are we going to build on it? What new structures, what novel institutions? What form will a better-rounded, more widely popular humanism take?

Tom Flynn is co-editor of the Secular Humanist Bulletin, and Director of the Center for Inquiry.

We don't know yet.

There is no shame in admitting ignorance, shame comes from pretending certainty one hasn't earned. We who are building the new eupraxophic humanism are like designers planning a new consumer product. We know there is a need to be met, but we are not yet sure what the product that fills the need is going to look like. In this situation, responsible designers do research, and so do we. Through a growing network of secular humanist centers, we are experimenting and letting the world tell us what works.

Some may find this a frustrating time to be a secular humanist. Much has been launched that has yet to take its final form. But this is also an exciting time to be a secular humanist, a time when individual initiative can make an enormous difference.

So do not think of eupraxophy as a finished product. It's an experiment—one you are invited to join.

Still, no one experiments in the dark. There is a good deal we already know from the experience of other humanist and free-thought groups. We can learn from existing models for humanist communities that have underperformed their founders' expectations, and we can move with special caution when we feel compelled to borrow from those models. For example, one of the models most often advanced for a humanist community program is the neighborhood church congregation. It is a model that many of us grew up in, and one that seems to embody the things that the members of any community of belief *ought* to do together.

But the congregation model's allure may be deceptive. Humanist groups have tried to emulate it before without achieving the kind of scope and momentum the Committee for Democratic and Secular Humanism seeks today. Before we cast too much of our humanist community program in stone, we might do well to ask why. What does a congregation do for its members that they are unwilling to seek in other venues? And is the "market basket" of needs that secular humanists bring to their community of belief enough like that of the churchgoer that we ought to expect the same model to serve them both?

Let us examine some of the things neighborhood congregations mean to their members. First, of course, most churches supply their members with a shared cosmology, and with some kind of answer to that first great question: "Why?" Why is the universe? Why are we? Why this way and not some other? A secular humanist community has the same obligation to address this issue that any congregation does. And our answer must address the emotional

aspects of this question as well as the scientific ones. In summary, as eupraxophers I believe we are going to want to emulate conventional congregations in offering an account of the universe and some kind of approach toward a reason for being. But ours is based on science and reason, not on outdated mythologies of the past.

Church congregations perform another major function, this time one humanists will definitely want to abandon to them. Shared worship is an important part of life in the

that are controversial and that in my judgment secular humanists ought to emulate with extreme care. Among these are emotional support in time of adversity and the "rites of passage." A humanist community that invests too heavily in providing services like these—just because congregations provide them—may not only find it has reinvented the wheel. It may find it has reinvented the buggy whip.

What does it mean to be secular? The dictionary speaks of being "of the world."

eū-prāx'ōphy

eu — good, well

praxis — conduct, practice

sophia — scientific and philosophic wisdom.

a set of convictions and practices offering a cosmic outlook and an ethical guide to life.

congregation, but one that most humanists can do without.

A third function is to provide a sense of social belonging. Congregation membership offers joyful immersion in a dynamic local community—on a small enough scale that individual contribution makes a difference. Most humanists already appreciate the value of companionship with others who think as they do. It's a function that current humanist groups are meeting. If only they met it more often, in more places. The growing network of secular humanist centers associated with FREE INQUIRY is striving to address this need. They have attached a high priority to discovering the kinds of programs and activities that meet it best.

Related to this is the historic role of the congregation in socializing and educating the young. Few are comfortable abdicating values-education outside of their community of belief. After all, it is precisely the moral values of that community to which members want their children exposed. Humanist children need education in humanist values and critical thinking just as badly as the children of the congregation. Though some Christians accuse us of driving their god out of the public square, we know that humanist youngsters still confront a culture utterly saturated with Christianity and other forms of uncritical belief. Education of the young is a job congregations do fairly well, and one that humanist organizations have often done poorly. It is a job we need to face.

Many of the congregational functions examined so far have proved appropriate for a humanist community as well. I will now turn to some functions of the congregation

An *operational* definition of secularism might focus on the tendency to reach outside one's community of belief for services that less secular persons might seek within it. In particular, I suspect that secular humanists are far more likely than congregation members to rely on agencies and institutions outside their community of belief for psychological services. If that is true, it would be risky indeed for a humanist community to rush into the pastoral counseling business.

Consider also that even churchgoers take their psychological burdens to secular professionals more often, and to their pastors less frequently, than was true a few decades ago. Even when we find a mainstream minister doing intensive pastoral counseling, we are liable to find that his or her divinity degree has been supplemented with substantial training in psychology.

If the role of pastoral counseling is declining even in mainstream religious life, and if secular humanists are even more likely than churchgoers to seek psychological services outside their community of belief, it stands to reason that a humanist community that emphasizes pastoral counseling will not prosper. A similar situation exists regarding rites of passage.

Millions of couples—churchgoers and secularists alike—exchange their wedding vows without benefit of clergy. They do not feel any less married for having been married by a judge or magistrate. Freethinker and humanist communities have taken countless initiatives through the years to encourage members to rely on their community of belief for marriage ceremonies. None of these initiatives has won broad popularity; there

may well be a lesson in that for us.

By the same logic, I think we should exercise caution before we invest in a substantial infrastructure for humanist funerals. Since we do not believe in an afterlife, we properly view funerals as ceremonies that operate solely for the benefit of survivors; the departed is utterly beyond our reach. Religious funerals meet participants' needs in the framework of a belief in the afterlife. The humanist way offers no such solace; it demands much more of the bereaved, and there is no point in our trying to deny it. Nor can we expect the lack of a belief in eternal life *not* to force immense changes on any humanist funeral ceremony that can be moving and meaningful to its participants. While many humanists will want to turn to their communities of belief for support in times of loss, others will turn elsewhere. Some will seek to do without ritual observance of any type. I suspect that successful humanist communities will leave room for all these approaches.

A secular humanist community might respond to death and bereavement in ways that emulate secular, psychological support groups rather than by imitating the congregation. Absent Friends, Parents Anonymous, AIDS support circles, and other groups offer us a model of the survivor support group that is organized according to

the nature of the dying experience, not according to one's belief. SOS, the Secular Organizations for Sobriety or Save Our Selves, offers an example of a self-help group that grew up entirely within the secular humanist community. But SOS arose in response to a specific problem—the spiritual emphasis of traditional twelve-step groups. SOS is a successful program that follows a psychological rather than a congregational model.

Other rites of passage, such as those corresponding to Christian baptism and confirmation, may be even less important to a secular humanist community. People go on having weddings and funerals after they give up religious belief and renounce church membership. But rituals that observe the birth of a baby or a child's arrival at formal maturity tend to be set aside when the rest of religious practice is abandoned; there's no clear secular analogue to baptism, and no ceremonial analogue to confirmation or the bar mitzvah. For most secular Americans, the adulthood ritual that matters is getting one's driver's license.

Humanist "christenings" and "confirmations" happen occasionally, but for me they have a forced quality, as though even the people involved in the ceremony realize that its only function is to parrot the externals of a churchly tradition that otherwise holds little meaning for them.

I have unburdened myself of a great load of opinion. Let me close with a summary. Secular humanism is more than an philosophy alone, more than just an ethical system, and more than simply an epistemology. And it is not a religion at all. In fact, none of the old labels—alone or in combination—suffice to account for what we are as secular humanists. The idea of eupraxophy represents a new opportunity to present secular humanism in a way that is emotionally as well as intellectually engaging. We are now experimenting with blueprints for a secular humanist community in which our eupraxophy can find full expression. It has often been suggested that this might take place in a setting that consciously emulates many of the functions of a traditional church congregation. In my opinion, this approach must be regarded skeptically indeed. Many secular humanists have already rejected one community of belief on the way to humanism. Their needs are no longer the same.

My message is not meant to discourage but to pose a challenge. If the congregation offers us limited guidance in structuring future humanist institutions, we simply need to focus our intelligence and creativity a bit more sharply. Above all, we who value the scientific method cannot afford to be casual about the way we address the emotional side of life in our communities. •

Linguistic Musings on "Eupraxophy"

When I introduced the term "eupraxophy," little did I imagine that it would stir up such a storm of controversy. I intended simply to describe more accurately what secular humanism is about: It is not a religion, since it does not profess a belief in the supernatural. Nor is it simply to be equated with philosophy, because it does not express a neutral intellectual position, but attempts to relate belief to concrete practice. Moreover, it cannot be equated with any of the special sciences, which tend to focus on a narrow discipline without developing a general cosmic outlook or the implications for value. Humanism draws upon philosophy and science but seeks to engender commitment and conviction. The term "eupraxophy" describes both a cosmic outlook and a way of life.

I coined the term using Greek roots since I could find no adequate terminology in the English language. Moreover,

since humanism is a worldwide movement, I wished to cut across language barriers and thus to be international in range. Many words are derived from Greek and Latin roots, particularly technical and scientific terms. Since I introduced "eupraxophy" some people have written to me, particularly from the Latin countries like Spain, that the word seems to better describe what humanists believe in.

Some of our readers have been enthusiastic about the new term. Some, however, have been offended by it and have insisted that we abandon it. There are three main complaints:

(1) It is a neologism, or a new word to replace established words. This is not a decisive objection, for English is a living language that is constantly being expanded by the introduction of new words. There is always a need for new definitions within a language system to apply to new concepts.

(2) "Eupraxophy" is "too scholarly." This, in my view, is hardly credible, for virtually all of our ever-expanding body of knowledge comes from scientists and scholars, who constantly introduce new terms and concepts. Furthermore, eupraxophy is not intended to *replace* humanism as a concept, but to supplement it.

(3) The word is difficult to pronounce. This objection seems to me to be the strongest, in terms of both mail volume and validity. But new words often take some time to catch on. I hope secular humanists will give "eupraxophy" a chance. The pronunciation guide and definition on page 17 will help, and FREE INQUIRY intends to run it as frequently as possible.

I wish to thank our readers for their input. The "Readers' Forum" column will address this issue in the near future, and I invite you to contribute.

—Paul Kurtz

A Eupraxopher's Agenda: Humanism and Religion

R. Joseph Hoffmann

I am happy with Paul Kurtz's effort to "rechristen" secular humanism a *eupraxophy*—the term moves us away from a description that is commonly understood as a negativizing of theistic belief and hence as negative in itself. Like it or not, the popular mind associates religiousness with morality. If therefore (the logic runs) humanism eliminates God as a term of moral reference, it fails to provide what religion has always provided: a recipe for the good life.

Such logic, of course, is insidious. It is both historically incorrect to suggest that religion has always evoked—or even cared to evoke—responsible behavior, and naive to assume that biblical codes or the theological ethics presumed to be built on them can provide norms or rules for dealing with the moral ambiguities engendered by social and technological change.¹ Kurtz has reminded us that one can be moral without being religious and religious without being moral. The chiasmus is almost too simple, too well-drawn a rhetorical X to be true. Indeed, for humanists the premise should be a cliché. But for the vast majority of American believers the association of religion and morality is the strongest part of their religious faith—stronger still because they have ceased to care about (or to see the market value in) the theological squabbles of yesteryear. On the whole, Christians are no longer willing to give their lives to defend their doctrine of the trinity. Somewhere between the fourth and twentieth centuries that enthusiasm leaked away. In Judaism too, the hope for a better life far outweighs the hope for a messiah. The material dawn—secular in origin and implication—has already arrived. It will finally come to the Middle East, as it has already come to much of Africa and more recently to Eastern Europe.

Wherever it comes there is cause for concern. The culture of materialism is not self-evidently good. It has little use for poetry

and art, and by all reckonings is a poor breeding-ground for the individual conscience. Liberal religion, perceiving that it is useful to oppose the magnet of human acquisitiveness, has accommodated itself to the money-values of the era by impoverishing its liturgies, turning church services into

Humanists should recognize that they have a quarrel with religion in all its forms, as long as the fallacious association of religiousness and morality persists.

the banal equivalent (if that is imagineable) of a Kiwanis Club singalong, and depressurizing its conscience from time to time by sending boxes of canned goods to starving Ethiopians and ordaining women as ministers of a gospel that many regard as sexist. Conservative religionists—at least those who have survived Pat Robertson's limp for the presidency and the Televangelical Parade of the Penitents—are hard at work again planning survival strategies for the 1990s. Admittedly, their easy identification of Christianity with capitalist values has been temporarily discredited. But a theology that regards God's mercy as endless and the saved as saved irrespective of outward moral appearances—not to mention a certain cultural symmetry between the sins of a Swaggart and the moral predilections of the wayward Pentecostals who pay to hear him—will do much to put the movement quickly right.

Religions of both a conservative and liberal bent have adapted to the threat of secular and material culture by convincing their believers that religion is no longer about sacrifice, poverty, death, and translation to the afterlife. Historically those are ingredients of the Western religious tradition. But no more. It is now essential that there be no cognitive hiccup when we pass from "Dallas" to "PTL," from "Day of Discovery" to "Days of Our Lives." Christians, like material girls, just want to have fun. Looking good and making money through the Spirit are the ingredients of the insipid materialism that brings Catholics, Pentecostals, and Jews together as a worshipping

family.

To repeat: materialism is not self-evidently good. It has no conscience. When religion sides with the make-megabucks philosophy of the day, it perceives a continuum from the contingent happiness of this world to the Endless Paid Vacation of the next. True, this is not what theologians say—privately—at divinity-school teas. But it is the message the churches propagate through inadvertance, silliness, or outright capitulation to the greed they share with their congregants. Religion must want people wealthy: church building-programs depend on it; and, as we are ceaselessly reminded, air-time costs money.

Adaptation rather than opposition is the

key to the survival of religious institutions in the next decade. The self-denial of the monk, the emphasis on the transience of worldly pleasure are historical curiosities when we behold the likes of Robert Schuller resplendent in doctoral robes, reminding a well-heeled and not unintelligent crowd that Tough Times Don't Last. (Sorry, Doc: could we go over that bit about Hell one more time, just to clarify?) With smiling self-assurance, fundagelical preachers and young seminarians can now defend their this-worldly orientation—everything from Tammy's makeup to building a bigger parish hall for the bingo games—on the reckoning (apparently) that God in his senescence forgot that he would come again. Thus have hell and apocalyptic torment receded into the doctrinal mist, even in conservative circles. Those sorts of expectations cause stress, and it is an article of psychiatric faith that stress should be avoided.

If religion cannot take its stand against material culture because it cannot afford to, and if it has no particular interest in defending the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas or Augustine's contempt for the body—because it has ceased to inhabit their intellectual world and comprehend their view—then where does it stand? In the only space left. It stands on morality because its wider circle of concern and influence has almost disappeared. Western religion—we are encouraged to think by every preacher worth the pulpit—is about peace and justice and the alleviation of hunger in the Third World. It is for the democratization of socialism and the socializing of repressive

R. Joseph Hoffmann is professor of humanities at California State University, Sacramento, and the author or editor of many books including The Origins of Christianity.

powers. It is about human rights and civil rights and women's rights. What we are not to see is the systemic hypocrisy that has obliged religion with its admittedly superior margin of power and influence and raw talent for emotional appeal to sap the humanist agenda and to make humanist goals its goals. We are not to see the dishonesty of its approach to morality, whereby a church no longer secure in its doctrine, disheveled in its liturgies, and uncertain of its role in the world still presumes to issue edicts on matters of urgently human concern, ranging from birth control and abortion to world peace and disarmament. As a result, the faithful cannot know whether they worship Christ or Janus: but they think they worship Christ.

It may seem to humanists that liberal religion is a natural if somewhat reticent ally at least in the furtherance of moral principles. It also seems, at least to the majority of humanists, that conservative religion—whether represented by the dogmatic thunderings of the fundagelicals or the dicta of popes—is opposed to the spirit of intellectual freedom and hence cannot be a source for moral good. Humanists are encouraged in their alliance with liberal religion by the awareness that many liberal Christians and Jews find repugnant the view of the Religious Right, and by the curious fact that some humanists prefer to think of themselves as theists.

My quarrel is with the fallacious thinking that prevents humanists from seeing that theists of all doctrinal gradations, insofar as they make theistic belief a presupposition of moral reflection and action, limit their freedom to engage in moral discourse. Such freedom entails the elimination of the God-concept and all fuzzy equivalents (like Tillich's God as "being itself") and hence any metaphysical scheme of extra-personal approbation, warrant, reward, or punishment as a spur to "being" moral.

It can be argued that most Unitarians, Ethical Culturalists, and religious humanists would make the God-concept optional and scarcely regard the Bible or theological ethics—however "situationally" they may be formulated—as mandatory guides in the conduct of day-to-day life. Many, indeed, would want to insist that their use of the word "religion" does not enclose their understanding of morality and that many moral people are nontheists. Yet it must be the case that the word "religious" *either* has something to do with morality, something that liberal religionists are unwilling to abandon, or something to do with the cult of unreason and neospirituality that has lately been touted as a cure for the "failure"

of secularism to provide a "holistic model of being."

Quite frankly, I do not understand language like that. It seems dangerously obscure and gnostic, and there is every reason to suppose that when sides are drawn, many liberal religionists will go the way of spirituality because they will only thereby be able to avoid the application of critical reason to the surviving elements of their traditions. In any case, resurgent spiritualism and not intellectual freedom is today the strongest part of liberal religion.

What this suggests is that liberal religionists cannot let go of the fundamental dichotomy that permits them to talk about spirituality as something in addition to the human person, something "lacking" or "missing" in home, society, school, or everyday life. It is tempting to regard morality as a characteristic of the spiritual dimension they find wanting: that government lacks integrity, that Americans have become litigious, that violence passes for art, that lying is prized in the marketplace—all of this goes to show, they would have it, that "spirituality" is on the decline. As I listen to such professions of concern, I do not so much detect the voice of "reason" as that of a theist who has only partly demythologized his or her world of meaning. In such a world, God may no longer sit on his throne as judge and lord, dispensing heavenly reward and hellish torment, but his androgynous legacy—"the spirit"—remains to invest human conduct with legitimacy and value. Needless to say, the latter image has more to commend it than the former. A humanist will want to insist, however, that both images fundamentally miss the mark, since both are based on an implausible view of the sources of value. One can no more speak meaningfully of the "spiritual" than of "God." However different the emotive content of such symbols, they point equally beyond themselves, beyond the self, and beyond reason to a point of reference we have no means of describing in common-sense language. William James, the sometimes unacknowledged patron saint of Harvard University and hence of liberal religion, is to blame for most of the confusion:

The inner need of believing that this world of nature is a sign of something more spiritual and eternal than itself is just as strong and authoritative in those who feel it as the inner need for uniform laws of causation ever can be in a professionally scientific head. . . . Now when I speak of trusting our religious demands [I mean] first of all to live by the light of them, and to act as if the invisible world which they suggest were real. It is a fact of human nature that men can live and die by the

help of a sort of faith that goes without a single dogma or definition.²

I translate this to mean: God does not exist, but we are to behave as though he does. Lacking Kant's delapidated equation of belief and morality (that is, we cannot establish through theoretical propositions that God exists, but we are justified in thinking he does through the "activity" of conscience, which permits us to deal with ideas about God as if they were true on "rational grounds"), William James could not have arisen to fire the souls of Boston Unitarians. But the proposition is no longer tenable. To act "as if" God exists because God is moral (or God is watching, or whatever) assumes what the history of theology cannot provide: the morality of the divine being in history. The biblical account, if it is of any importance at all, defeats any such description of the God of Israel.

"The great enemy of believing" writes Garry Wills, "is pretending to believe; [and Christians] have not found a short cut to belief—only a method for forgetting they pretend."³ I am saying that religious humanists and humanist-leaning religious liberals are guilty of misappropriating symbols, the one by assuming that religion can be religion without doctrine, without content, with merely a vague affection for the moral life as something rooted in a "higher" or "spiritual" self; the other by assuming that the old symbols, patched up, degenerated, accommodated to reflect the material expectations and moral predisposition of assorted congregants can substitute for the dogmatic certainties of another age and (worse) can convincingly argue the case for "religion" in an age of exploding scientific and technical sophistication.

Humanists should recognize that they have a quarrel with religion in all its forms, as long as the fallacious association of religiousness and morality persists. Since moral "certitude" is the last commodity for sale in the church, it is unlikely that this quarrel will be short-lived.

Notes

1. A 1986 conference of the Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion explored the putative relationship between religion and ethics. See *Biblical v. Secular Ethics: The Conflict*, G. Larue and R. J. Hoffmann, eds. (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1987).

2. James, "Is Life Worth Living?" in *William James: Essays on Faith and Morals*, ed. Ralph Barton Perry (New York, 1962), p. 25.

3. Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion* (New York, 1971), p. 269.

Tell a friend about **Free Inquiry**

Published by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism

In their first decade, CODESH and FREE INQUIRY have had a significant impact on the worlds of religion, philosophy, and public policy. But they are only as strong as CODESH's members and FREE INQUIRY's readership.

For that reason, we urge readers of FREE INQUIRY to help us grow. Other "cause organizations" have had good results with "member-get-a-member" drives; with that in mind, we announce FREE INQUIRY's "reader-get-a-reader" drive.

We suspect that most readers know at least one other person who could share their interest in the bold ideas explored in each issue of FREE INQUIRY—most know more than one. Now is the time to urge your friends to subscribe on their own.

Like every subscriber, your friends will receive four issues of FREE INQUIRY and three issues of the *Secular Humanist Bulletin*. New subscribers will also have the opportunity to join CODESH and to participate in local humanist groups or special-interest groups like African-Americans for Humanism or Secular Organizations for Sobriety.

It all begins when your friends subscribe to FREE INQUIRY. You can make that easier by clipping the subscription coupons below and passing them on.

For secular humanism, like everything else in life, there's power in numbers. Now is your chance to help build the power of the secular humanist viewpoint embodied in FREE INQUIRY.

Please rush my first issue of FREE INQUIRY magazine today!

☐ \$22.50—One year

☐ \$39.00—Two years

☐ \$54.00 Three years

☐ Check enclosed ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard # _____ Exp. _____

Canadian and foreign subscriptions: Add \$6.00 per year for surface postage; add \$12.00 per year for air mail. All amounts in U.S. funds only.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: **FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Central Park Station, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005**

To order outside NYS dial Toll FREE 1-800-458-1366. In New York State (716) 834-2921.

Please rush my first issue of FREE INQUIRY magazine today!

☐ \$22.50—One year

☐ \$39.00—Two years

☐ \$54.00 Three years

☐ Check enclosed ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard # _____ Exp. _____

Canadian and foreign subscriptions: Add \$6.00 per year for surface postage; add \$12.00 per year for air mail. All amounts in U.S. funds only.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: **FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Central Park Station, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005**

To order outside NYS dial TOLL FREE 1-800-458-1366. In New York State (716) 834-2921.

Why I am Not a Methodist

Don DeHart Bronkema

Most Americans enjoy no direct recollection of the 1930s. Their perception of the period is filtered through endless PBS replays of fading films: soup lines, veterans ripping up streetcar tracks, hoboes tramping door-to-door for handouts, the Ford River Run massacre, Oakies fleeing the dustbowl in the flivvers. It was, for most, a time of bottomless despair. The radical protests of the metropole were matched in the farm towns of middle America, where I grew up, by the mass dumping of milk and produce that could not be sold, and frequent violence at sheriffs' auctions.

People had some resources to draw upon, however. They baked bread and canned their own fruits and vegetables. They made potholders for sale or took in wash. The grocer gave credit, and a generous landlord might let them off the hook for six months at a time. Above all, the glue that held everything together in these isolated communities was the church—and not just its eleemosynary labors. Some forty or fifty years ago the heartland was steeped in Christian values. Christian teaching suffered no media competition. It was accepted by all but an infinitesimal, despised minority, and its influence was felt in the most intimate quotidian affairs.

Preachers dominated the radio. Grace at meals, like Sunday school, was *de rigueur*. Comics were quickly tossed behind the sofa when grandma came, reminding us that the seventh day belonged to the Lord. Old folks, basking on their porches, erupted in expletives like “Land o’ Goshen!” and “Saints be praised!” New jackets were mandatory at Easter and every six-year-old got a picture Bible from his or her pastor. Any small misfortune was proof of divine displeasure. That’s the way it was in Muscatine, Iowa.

Such an idyll could not last. In June 1941, four months after my tenth birthday, my foster parents—illiterate, broke, and desperate—decamped for a larger nearby city, where they found jobs in the burgeoning armaments industry. To my recollection, neither of them ever passed through the portals of any church after that point, but for the following eight years Methodism was the cynosure of my allegiance. Because I had the “gift of gab,” I was given many opportunities to lead. At thirteen, I was put in charge of Sunday evening programs for the Methodist Youth Fellowship. That meant devising liturgy, arranging music, delivering a twenty-minute sermon, leading prayers, and supervising snacks, cleanup, and recreation.

Don DeHart Bronkema is a public affairs officer at the Environmental Protection Agency and a freelance writer.

The confidence thus placed in me by the congregation was immensely gratifying and a total shock, since every move I made at home was fastidiously criticized and regulated, and the junior high school, controlled by a hostile dean of boys, provided no room for maneuver. In comparison, the church was a font of freedom and tolerance, a refuge from a world that saw me as a threat or a pain in the neck.

Not long after came my big bazhour, as the Gypsies say. The minister asked me to take over Sunday morning services during his brief sojourn to Chicago, and I grabbed the chance. I scoured the scriptures for dramatic material. My sermon amounted to an apocalyptic speculation laced with a touch of brimstone; it ended in brisk applause. It so happened, moreover, that another clergyman had been in the pews that fateful morning; he came up afterward and insisted that I talk to his parishioners as well. The next Sunday I did so, and tossed in as much additional hellfire as seemed consistent with the general quality of sin in that part of town. I wound up my peroration with what came to be a characteristic warning: “Repent ye and be saved, brethren, for the kingdom is at hand!” That always left them howling.

As my reputation for incendiary speechifying spread in the county, invitations began to flow in for “the little professor” from other churches roundabout. I was beginning to enjoy the adulation, so I accepted their offers. Had no outside force supervened, I’d probably have become a James Robison or Jimmy Swaggart (minus, I trust, the voyeurism). But there was a serpent lurking in the garden. I was acquiring a taste for inconvenient questions.

The day after my folks moved, I had wandered into the Carnegie Library, thinking it to be the YMCA. It was an astounding repository considering its time, place, and budget. In the three months between fourth and fifth grades I devoured the shelves devoted to geology, archaeology, anthropology, and astronomy—about one volume a twelve-hour day, with no time out for meals.

Lest these lucubrations seem too improbable, it must be admitted that the Carnegie was one of only three air-conditioned buildings in town, and that, in the inferno of a Midwestern summer, was no small consideration.

Inevitably, scientific ideas wormed their way into my sermons: first, natural selection, the red shift, and humanity in the Paleozoic Age; then quantum mechanics, general relativity and the uncertainty paradox; and eventually speculations on space travel, syntelligence, robotics, computers, molecular engineering, and other sci-fi stuff. In a word, themes not anticipated in Daniel or Revelations.

At first, I was a guest preacher mainly in rural parishes,

where ordained clergy were in short supply and the education level was so low that I could get away with almost any remarks, however bizarre or incomprehensible, as long as they glorified the name of Jesus and could be tailored to the common view of "progress." I sincerely believed that it was possible to reconcile dogma with the findings of the laboratory and the observatory.

My radical approach met with little resistance in the beginning, and by my fifteenth year, now armed with additional research, I began to push pacifism, world government, miscegenation, interlingua, and technocracy. Fortified by the approbation of captive audiences in Iowa and Illinois and basking in the fame of their protégé, advancement of the local diaconate propelled me into an ever-expanding arena of ambient states, as well as the upper South. My main competition was "Little David" Sinnslaier, and equally pint-sized, twelve-year-old dynamo with a foghorn voice, who roared on about the fires of hell with such panache and conviction that one was half persuaded that he had served time there himself. David was eventually unmasked as a cigar-chomping midget from Paducah who deflowered every virgin in his path and gambled the missionary money away on puts and calls.

David's demise made me a little more palatable by comparison, and also enabled me to expand the business. I use the phrase metaphorically, because all funds raised except travel costs were bound over to host churches. In the ensuing months I chattered away on radio and preached frequently.

About eighteen months before hitting the wall, I had really begun to push Marx, Einstein, Darwin, and Freud in my sermons, hesitantly at first and then more boldly. "Did you know that Jesus was a Marxist?" I asked, and heads shook. "Did you know that the universe has no boundaries in space or time?" The heads wavered. "Did you know that God never created the world in an instant, but let life evolve over billions of years?" Eyes opened wide. "Did you know that according to St. Sigmund, sex is not evil, filthy, and disgusting, but necessary for a normal life?" Jaws dropped. "And do you realize, brethren, that the Bible is not infallible; that it contains hundreds, if not thousands, of mistakes; that it's laden with folk etymologies, spurious events, bogus claims, unprovable assertions, and anachronistic redactions? Were you aware that the Holy Book is pervasively inconsistent, assumes what it tries to prove, and requires us to believe what is contrary to common sense and natural law? No, brethren, the Bible is an uncertain cicerone, and to follow any single line of it slavishly is an abomination unto the Lord. Yea, Bible-worshippers are guilty of idolatry; they must be cast out. If a new theology needs to be established, let's do it. Think on it. Repent of nothing but ignorance! Let us pray."

Well, it began to be said that I was a heretic, an apostate, a turbulent spirit, a blasphemer, a voice of Satan, a maniac, and a Communist. About the only crime omitted was pederasty. But since I eschewed the more radical statements while on radio, it took the better part of a year before the gravamen of these charges began to be felt back in the home parish. My sponsors, in conclave assembled, quietly questioned my "revelations" (all straight from the man upstairs, I said).

They felt betrayed, and openly puzzled over where they had gone wrong.

"You haven't," I insisted. "Everything has worked out according to God's plan. Christ is not the last avatar of the Almighty. We have not seen the last revelation. Indeed, there will be an infinite number of revelations. There are prophets to come, and one you have heard even now." The minute those words escaped my mouth I knew I had done myself in. Megalomania had triumphed over discretion. My commission was withdrawn with regrets and the Methodist church could no longer sponsor me or be connected to my name.

Three months later, in the fall of 1949, after a brutal summer penance in the bowels of the International Harvester Corporation's welding department, I entered Augustana College, a mid-ranking Lutheran institution in neighboring Rock Island. My scholarship to the University of Illinois, awarded for the top statewide score that year, turned out not to include room and board, an expense far beyond the budget of a working-class family, and Columbia was then only a dream. The first year at Augustana was difficult. I was saturated with guilt, terrified of girls, and bitter about the loss of my anchor, the church. Only a half-dozen matriculants displayed the slightest interest in the life of the mind, and half of those found me obnoxious because of my continual savage questioning of every aspect of campus life and the universe in general. Moreover, my brand of theology was definitely not in fashion now that the Cold War was well underway.

By happy accident I fell under the tutelage of Theodore Celms, a Latvian émigré and one-time professor of philosophy at Göttingen, who taught me to question all things, not just 99 percent of them. By November, I had transited to atheism, from which I have never deviated since. I wrestled with the ontological and epistemological issues, the known facts and all reasonable interpretations, and concluded that, wish it or not, God is just another superstition that must be discarded if humanity is to direct its own evolution.

The pain, however, was excruciating; I couldn't eat or sleep for a year—a weird reaction in someone who had been an atheist-unaware all his life, and for whom prayers vanished into the void. Coming out of the theological closet, I delved deeper into history, literature, myth, logic, mathematics, and biography to see where meaning lay, but to no avail. There were no Answers; there could be no Answers. But that was no justification for an existential leap of faith à la Kierkegaard. Faith is cowardice, down which road lies objurgation and contempt of the self, not to speak of the sacrifice of intellect, the sole feature that distinguishes us from the animals, upon the altar of comfortable, expedient illusions. I continued to fear death, and to be obsessed by it, for decades. Now I realize that the only ones who fear it are those who have done nothing, risked nothing. It is not one's demise, but living a life that is pointless in humanistic terms, that is so deeply tragic.

I returned to First Methodist in September 1950 to put my year of agony in perspective. The good people of the church ignored me or pretended not to know who I was. My younger contemporaries had gone off to school in distant

places or into the army; I have not seen them since.

Though I have long since abandoned all hope of salvation (and have had to postpone my expectation that world government, mass intermarriage, total disarmament, a universal language, voluntary eugenics, licensed parenting, and planetary ecomanagement were imminent), I will certainly concede the formative impact of church teaching. It was Judeo-Christian culture, after all, that gave rise to the very idea of linear history; expanded the notion of agape; helped to preserve classical learning; promoted the essential technology of clocks and water wheels; recognized, theoretically at least, that women are more than breeders and beasts of burden; spread the concept of civic obligation, as opposed to the notion that all social responsibility ends at the household gate; and refuted belief in the transmigration of souls—the root cause of the historical passivity of the Eastern mind, whose incubus is only now being tossed off. No mean accomplishments, however contingent.

So what are the consequences of being an openly atheistic, socialistic, pacifistic, one-worlder (or, as my first sergeant in the Eleventh Airborne once put it, correctly on two counts, a “godless pinko fag”)? It may surprise some that such views are not as dangerous as is commonly assumed. This is not El Salvador or Guatemala. My “weird ideas,” of which only a few are elucidated here, have cost me a job here and there along the way. But that’s par in politics.

It seems to me that our irrefragable obligation as humanistically oriented nonbelievers is to demonstrate that such a stance is not only logical, but honorable and feasible, with many dividends in terms of self-respect and ethical independence. To the extent that we confess our position in public, we will also enjoy the benisons of group identity, mutual aid, collective influence, and individual security. We must, at the very least, prove by our behavior in the social marketplace that it is possible to be moral without absolutes or the promise of paradise, wise enough without metaphysics, and creative without a transcendental point of view.

Whether we can advance the cause of humanity and protect our interests as an unpopular minority in the absence of institutional arrangements is debatable, in my opinion, yet the very spirit of atheism/skepticism/humanism is such as to render cooperation problematical. We are not joiners, as a rule, and all too often we hunker down to obviate decapitation. We react only when we are threatened by a Hitler or even a Reagan. We take our liberties for granted, forgetting how unique in history they are, how fragile, how easily swept to oblivion by the fears and passions of the moment.

If we are to build a truly secular planetary community—one in which nationalism, racism, dogmatic capitalism or Marxism, sexism, agism, and homophobia are rejected as obsolete, if not absurd—then individuals of radical persuasion must stop hiding and “come out” into broad daylight, where they can be seen for what they are. Once the people see that we sport no horns, have the courage of our convictions, and are ready to lay our careers and our very lives on the line, then we shall begin to persuade even the unthinking. Otherwise,

the mass of humanity will persist indefinitely in its bizarre practice of living a *de facto* secular life while denouncing the very philosophy that made it possible. Such logic-tight compartments are pathogenic for both the person and the polity.

My experiences as a child evangelist prove that we can take the fragments of the popular mind and hammer them into a new cultural configuration. “But didn’t they throw you out?” you ask. Yes, but what impressed me was not my predictable sacerdotal demise, but the extraordinary willingness of the common people to listen to the most far-reaching ideas and even—until interfered with—to give their assent, if such ideas are clearly explained in terms of the facts, needs, fears, and aspirations of everyday life and purged of demagogic lingo about “class struggle” or “the evil empire.” Sure, the church still has substantial residual power—as opposed to intellectual authority—by virtue of its inertia. But not forever, as we see in the history of ancient religion; it’s guiding ethos is fading fast.

It is ironic, but hardly surprising, that a revolutionary approach to social reconstruction, based not upon time-worn rhetoric but upon a willingness to face reality, should have emerged with hurricane force in Eastern Europe, and above all in the person of a quondam apparatchik like Mikhail Gorbachev. What a tribute to the genius of the human race and its hunger for elemental truth, for an end to hypocrisy, mendacity, and pusillanimity. Here is the spirit of atheism at its best, one willing to give even the Orthodox Church its freedom, in full confidence that in an open equilateral contest with reason it is bound—after an initial effloration—to fall flat on its reactionary face. The death of religion, a denouement devoutly to be hoped for, can never be reached by following the road of repression, but only by giving religious institutions enough rope to hang themselves. We see this happening a fortiori in Poland, where the church and Solidarity are parting company on a range of issues, of which birth control and abortion are the most dynamic.

In short, atheists/agnostics/humanists of the world, despair not! We are winning on all fronts and have been since the tidal wave of the *Principia* washed over the earth 304 years ago, notwithstanding an occasional gurgle by some ayatollah, domestic or foreign. Each periodic recrudescence of fundamentalism is feeble than its predecessor (compare the Wesleyan updraft of 1785–1810 with the revivalism of the 1920s and the pitiful born-again of 1976–86). The force of reason is ineluctable in the long run and, therefore, so are the tropisms of peace, equality, justice, and due process of law. Indeed, over the next century or so, we will confront a quite contrary, antinometric challenge. We are rushing headlong into an new epoch wherein humanity will not be able to survive without taking the last, most minacious step in its evolution. We will become irreversibly dependent upon instruments of reason to a far more pervasive extent than heretofore imagined, and in surrendering to and integrating them, become a new species, still vaguely recognizable yet radically different. But sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof; right now, the main obstacle to social progress is revealed religion. ●

Giving the Devil Much More Than His Due

Shawn Carlson and Gerald A. Larue

Satan! The dread word reaches into the very depths of our beings and touches fears nurtured in all of us since we were old enough to grasp the concepts of good and evil. Satan, Lucifer, Beezlebub, Old Nick, Old Scratch, the Fallen Angel, the father of the Antichrist, the Devil: all these names conjure images that personify the Western concept of evil. These images, cultivated and embellished through the centuries, often have a profound and deeply disturbing effect on the human psyche and are routinely reinforced in our minds by Hollywood and enhanced by the preachings of many religious leaders. In some significant social sense, then, the Devil *is* with us—but to what extent does he affect our society? How much of the Devil's reputation is myth and how much is real?

Since the late 1970s, monstrous allegations have been laid at the Devil's doorstep. These include allegations of mass murder, suicide pacts, cannibalism, grave robbing, animal mutilation—not to mention the kidnapping, rape, and murder of children on an enormous scale. Groups of self-proclaimed "experts" regularly tour the country, appearing before police groups, on radio programs, and on national television talk shows, saying that the Devil's minions are busy in America doing their master's work. They say that a great conspiracy of satanists exists for the purpose of doing evil in the Devil's name; a conspiracy that involves people in every level of government. They say that millions of women willingly give up their babies to be used in satanic pornography rings, satanic ritual abuse and, ultimately, satanic sacrifice. They say that satanists regularly participate in ghastly rituals involving corpses, sexual orgies, and murder. They say that the total lack of physical evidence to support their claims only goes to prove how fiendishly clever the satanists are. . . . They say a lot of things, and a lot of people are listening!

The Committee for Scientific Investigation of Religion (CSER) has investigated over the past three years allegations

of satanic practices in America.

CSER fully appreciates the issues being grappled with. The allegations of satanic criminal activity are being treated very seriously by many concerned people. Millions of Americans have a strong religious belief in the existence of Satan as an actual, menacing force for evil in this world. These beliefs, coupled with allegations that paint satanists as inhuman monsters who ruthlessly defile all of the common moral decencies, make satanism an explosive issue. The entire topic of satanic belief, satanic religious practices, and ritual crime is an abyss of bigotry and ignorance because of thousand-year-old superstitions and misunderstandings. Satanism has

Although satanism may be a *symptom* of a sick mind, it is not the *cause* of mental illness. The forces of unreason have marshaled together, and innocent people are suffering as a result of the hysteria.

reached the limelight, and remained there, because of religious arrogance and intolerance through which tiny bubbles of truth must perilously percolate if they are to break onto the surface of the public mind.

The media coverage of the satanic-conspiracy allegations has been mixed. Many carefully researched articles have been published by investigative journalists interested in facts. Unfortunately, many misleading—and downright false—reports have appeared and gained a considerable amount of public attention. Especially memorable among these was *Devil-worship: Exposing Satan's Underground*, hosted by Geraldo Rivera, and aired nationally on NBC October 25, 1988. More people watched this program than any other television documentary in history. Unfortunately, what viewers saw was a poorly researched, sensationalistic, misleading, and highly irresponsible piece of journalism. Much of the information Rivera presented was inaccurate, and many key facts were omitted.

Since his special, Rivera has continued promoting the thesis that satanic crime is a serious problem. He regularly devotes segments of his daily talk show, *Geraldo*, to satanism and related topics. The claims made on his shows, and similar allegations reported elsewhere in the press, have fanned the flames of fear about satanic cults, and have the potential to

Shawn Carlson is a physicist at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory and a technical consultant to the Committee for Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER). Gerald A. Larue is Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at the University of Southern California at Los Angeles. This article is excerpted from CSER's 1989 report, "Satanism in America," available through Gaia Press, P.O. Box 466, El Cerrito, California 94530-9466.

trigger a hysterical reaction in the public against a threat that simply is not real.

Unfortunately, the acceptance of misinformation and false fears is not limited to "trash" journalists or to the public. False information is being uncritically accepted by many law enforcement agencies, psychologists, religious leaders, and special-interest groups that have turned their energies and resources toward rooting out the "satanic threat." As a result, great damage is now being done. For example, some District Attorneys have been quick to indict people on minimal evidence because of the heinousness of the allegations. In the past five years, hundreds of people have been indicted on allegations of involvement in Satanic child-abuse rings—and most of them were eventually cleared due to lack of evidence. That the cases are usually dropped does not erase the days, weeks, or months people spend in police custody while their own children are placed in foster care; nor does it bring back the jobs and reputations lost during each ordeal. In short, lives have been destroyed by unproved and untrue accusations of ritual child abuse that were processed only because of the constant agitation and rumor-mongering.

Juries are rightfully incredulous of satanic conspiracy charges and, consequently, tend not to convict in cases where these allegations are raised. These allegations are most often associated with child sexual abuse cases—dramatically impacting the complexion of many of the cases. Valuable time is spent concentrating on proving ritual aspects, treating the abuse itself as secondary, talking about the satanism, and ignoring the damage caused to the children by victimization. The children are forced to tell and retell their stories—reliving the trauma many times more than if ritual allegations had not been involved. Needless to say, this significantly adds to the child's trauma. There may even be cases where real child abusers are going free because of the prosecution's fascination with or delusions about satanic trappings. In other words, children may be getting hurt and child abusers may be going free as a result of the misinformation now widely accepted as fact by law-enforcement officials.



'IT'S AMAZING WHAT I HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE NAME OF RELIGION.'

CSER feels that it is crucial to bring a rational and systematic approach to the field of satanic conspiracy theories.

After three years of investigating allegations of the existence of large-scale Devil-worship and satanic activities presently underway in America, CSER has concluded that these allegations are tall pillars of nonsense built on the slippery sands of unreason. It doesn't take too hard a shove to topple them.

Like all social panics, the anti-satanism hysteria feeds on long-held ignorance coupled with the prejudice often associated with a group whose beliefs and lifestyles are different from one's own. Satanism, we are told, attacks the very essence of American society. Satanists worship the Devil. They murder babies. They have no respect for law and order. They desecrate religious sites. They are out to take control of the world, *and they are in your very neighborhood!* Nothing could be more wrong.

Many of our colleagues, motivated by concern for our reputations, have warned us to defend neither the satanists nor those who are incorrectly branded as satanists. While we appreciate their concerns and respect their well-considered opinions, we feel that the lessons of history demand that we say something. We are sure that many well-intentioned people gave similar advice about defending the Jews in Germany during the 1930s or defending those labeled Communists in this country in the 1950s. A serious wrong is being committed in our society against a religious minority whose beliefs and practices are greatly misunderstood. We feel that it is the social responsibility of all academics and researchers to keep the public informed about every socially relevant issue on which their research bears. This means that we must first seek the truth and then speak it often, clearly, and in every forum in which we are afforded a fair hearing. Furthermore, we must accept the consequences of our actions.

We wish to state for the record that the authors of this report are not members of either the recognized satanic churches or any satanic cult or organization. Further, the Committee for Scientific Examination of Religion does not advocate the practice of satanism, occultism, or devil-worship in any form. We do, however, support and defend the Constitution and all the freedoms it guarantees, and stand ready to speak out in defense of any religious minority that is unfairly maligned, even if such support is not popular. We know full well that the advocates of the devil-worship conspiracy theory will use our exposé of their motives, our defense of the rights of satanists, and our exposition of satanism as a benign, though unorthodox, religion to brand both CSER and the authors of this report as members of the great "conspiracy." We accept this impending slander as the cost for bringing this information to light.

The truth then is that satanism is, as a religion, unfairly maligned and much misunderstood. It is a recognized religion in this country. The Church of Satan and all of the other satanic churches deny the existence of the Judeo-Christian God and deny the existence of the Christian "fallen angel" Lucifer. All expressly forbid breaking the law and specifically reject murder, child abuse of any kind, or the ritual harming animals. We find it a sad commentary on the ignorance of some law-enforcement officers that any teenager who commits

violent acts and has a copy of Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible* somewhere on his or her book shelf is assumed to have been driven to violence by satanism—especially when such behavior is expressly forbidden by that religion.

There is no single nationwide cult or network, existing unchanged since the Middle Ages, consciously and deliberately influencing the lives and minds of our children. All that can be said with certainty is that some criminals have taken on occult trappings in the commission of their crimes. These acts never appear to be caused by satanism. Kenneth Lanning of the F.B.I. has investigated these allegations for years and states that there are no cases in the United States in which devil-worship itself was the sole motivation for any murder. That is, there are no instances of a stranger being kidnapped and ritually sacrificed solely for the purpose of glorifying the Devil. Every respected law-enforcement officer whom we interviewed agreed with this assertion.

Violence is committed under many names. Murders have been justified in the name of Christ many more times than in the name of Lucifer. Although Devil-worship may be a *symptom* of a sick mind, it is not the *cause* of mental illness.

When confronted with horrific and brutal crimes against children one may come to know evil in its rawest form. When ritual trappings are associated with brutalities the Prince of Evil is the natural suspect. It is therefore easy to understand why investigators have so quickly come to believe that satanism was involved in such cases. It is also easy to understand why, once they arrive at those conclusions, their zeal to protect children could blind them to contrary information until they reach the most profound absurdities. One would hope that experience in investigative journalism could keep one's eyes open—but the sad experience of Geraldo Rivera's "exposé" and many other sensational reports proves that this is not true.

PPsychologists agree that, for a parent, the most traumatic experience possible is the loss of a child. And if that death was a suicide a whole new measure of anguish is heaped on top of the parent's misery.

To keep our sanity in times of great stress, human beings have developed many emotional "safety valves"—ways of directing our energies away from introspection and toward justifying our mistakes. We look for quick and comfortable "villains" on which to blame our suffering. Is it any wonder, then, that rock music and role-playing games are so often blamed for tragedies that could have been but were not averted?

Ignorance and the fear it breeds are never idle. History gives sad testament to the ubiquity and power of these social forces. In the 1950s they conspired to create what America now collectively regards as one of its most shameful episodes in living memory—the Communist witch-hunts of Joseph McCarthy. And now these forces have joined again to infuse society with a new paranoia—anti-satanism—that parallels even more directly the Inquisitional tyrannies that are commonly invoked to describe its anti-Communist twin.

This new hysteria is continuing to build a head of steam, and if the brakes are not thrown on hard it may soon dwarf its 1950s predecessor. The forces of unreason have marshaled

together their considerable might on the side of prejudice, injustice, and hate-mongering, and innocent people are again suffering as a result. Several researchers have revealed the absurdity of the allegations made by "satanic conspiracy" theorists. But CSER is the first group to document the religious and political beliefs of this theory's chief architects. It is now abundantly clear that a small minority of ultra-right-wing fundamentalists and evangelical Christians, believing in the reality of Satan as a personality and that the Tribulation is at hand, are responsible for the misinterpretation, dissemination, and in some instances the outright fabrication of "facts" to support what is essentially a religious doctrine. These people are not researchers in pursuit of truth, but crusaders against the Antichrist, whom they believe a priori is now living among us. We submit that people so deeply committed to this religious view can hardly be counted upon to render skeptical and well-reasoned critiques about the dangers of satanism or occultism in American society.

The promoters of this idea are themselves suspect. Some are opportunists who have used sweeping statements justified only by shoddy research to create for themselves a cottage industry of fear. They sell books, appear on national television, and collect substantial fees from the lecture circuit. Many others have a long history of activism on the political fringe; most have long-time and very strong ties to Christian fundamentalism and claim that only "born again" believers have the spiritual strength and clarity of vision to investigate the occult. Most of the self-described "survivors" and "occult investigators" claim to have had personal real-life brushes with demonic forces that we argue can more easily be explained as delusional episodes brought on by religious overindulgence than by a maniacal Satan summoning demons against them. Some promoters are bereaved parents who carry out personal crusades against the Forces of Darkness to exculpate themselves from responsibility for their children's bad behavior. Finally, there are those whose long histories of emotional and/or psychological problems are well documented.

Although opportunism and faith masquerading as fact have ruled in this field for the past ten years, we are optimistic that the tide is turning. A number of serious researchers, devoid of a priori opinions to justify any way they can, have done good work in the field. There are a few real experts; skeptical, careful, and reasonable.

None of the theory's proponents can provide any significant physical evidence in support of their claims. We have yet to find a single skeptical researcher who believes that a large-scale satanic criminal conspiracy exists or that satanic crime constitutes a significant fraction of the crimes to which Americans annually fall victim.

In short, America is safe. We need not take special precautions against Devil-worshippers kidnapping our children. We need not root out an evil conspiracy from all levels of government. We need not live in fear that satanists are recruiting our family members into performing unspeakable acts. Devil-worship is no threat to our society.

People who worry about a rising tide of satanic crime in America are giving the Devil much more than his due. ●

The Dangerous Folklore of Satanism

Phillips Stevens Jr.

Folklore can be dangerous. It is well documented in history and anthropology that in times of social uncertainty and discontent there may develop a demonology, an elaborate body of belief about an evil force that is inexorably undermining the society's most cherished values and institutions. The evil it describes may be embodied in and perpetrated by a specific group, a minority that becomes the scapegoat for the people's pent-up frustration. Or the evil force may be a set of ideas, often exaggerated or totally imaginary; an ideology that spreads as if driven by a will of its own, or by a supernatural will. The perceived threat may be given credence as certain deviant individuals or groups are attracted to it as a source of power or enhanced identity, and attempt to act it out. Examples of such persecuted minorities in Western history are the Jews—over and over again—or Bolsheviks, or Japanese-Americans. Examples of the other, the pervasive ideology of evil, include various late-medieval heresies, including witchcraft, communism in the 1950s, and satanism today.

In the past few years apparently millions of people in our country have been caught up in beliefs in "a national network of criminal cults," or "an international satanic conspiracy." The surprising strength of popular fear of satanism is evidenced by Procter & Gamble's defeat in 1985 by tens of thousands of complaints that its hundred-year-old man-in-the-moon logo was a satanic emblem. And in many rural areas of the country, terrified communities have virtually shut down against fears of kidnappings by satanic cults.¹

Representatives of the news media have shown incredible carelessness in checking their sources, and increasing willingness to jump to "satanic" interpretations of gruesome or terrifying crimes. The near-hysterical public credulity has generated a number of "experts" who travel about giving

lectures and seminars to confused law-enforcement, civic, and religious leaders. Many of them make increasingly sweeping and irresponsible pronouncements about the nature and extent of the "problem," and they thereby intensify public concern—unintentionally, perhaps; but considering the hefty fees they charge we might assume they have a vested interest in keeping the craze alive.² But despite the media attention given to the problem, the vast majority of allegations of "satanic" or other "occult-related" criminal acts are based on the very skimpiest of evidence; often on no evidence at all. Extensive—and expensive—investigations of sworn testimonies of participants in bizarre and bloody rituals, of women claiming to have been forced to "breed babies" for sacrifice, and of witnesses to ritual murders, yield no corroborative results.

Yet the folklore builds. Reports of a certain few celebrated cases are repeated over and over again, in books, pamphlets, special reports, newspaper articles, television specials, symposia, seminars, and lectures. Specific details are few, and close attention to such reports always leaves many basic questions unanswered. In many cases it is clear that even the allegations are confused; the label "satanic" has been applied to almost anything an influential individual or group finds disturbing, deviant, or un-Christian. It is becoming socially, racially, and religiously divisive. And it is all folklore, of a particularly insidious and dangerous form.

Historical background

The folklore of satanism has roots in the later Middle Ages, but it received its current form in the bizarre creations of a small group of nineteenth- and twentieth-century occultists.

Satan was relatively unimportant in the first thousand years of the Christian era; his importance developed quickly in the waning years of the first millennium. Following a literal interpretation of Chapter 20 of the Book of Revelation, Europeans anticipated a cataclysmic apocalypse. Millennial expectations continued and intensified in subsequent centuries as economic and social conditions worsened. Looking back at those conditions, we can see disturbing parallels to trends and social perceptions of today. They included rural emigrations and uncontrolled urbanization, which led to urban overcrowding, poor sanitation and hygiene, high unemployment and inflation, the weakening of kinship and other social



Phillips Stevens Jr. is associate professor of anthropology at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

networks, a rapid increase in ethnic and cultural heterogeneity. As the cities' needs for fuel and lumber grew, the forests receded. With the decline of the rural labor force and the feudal system, agricultural productivity became insufficient to meet the food needs of the cities.

Wealth and power became increasingly concentrated; the rich grew richer and the poor poorer and more numerous. Corruption was rife, and the church fattened its coffers through simony and sales of heavenly real estate. The ordinary people felt increasingly alienated from government, the church, and the upper classes, who occupied themselves with internal squabbles, the ideals of chivalry, and civil and international military ventures. Urban life was dismal and depressing, and alchemists did a brisk business in mind-altering drugs. The problems of day-to-day life were exacerbated by the increasingly brutal efforts of the Inquisition to ferret out heresy, in the cities and throughout the countryside. As the Inquisition became more powerful, suspicions and accusations of heresy snowballed before it, and by the end of the thirteenth century inquisitorial attention had focused mainly upon that arch-heretic, the witch. Unlike God, who could work His will on the world directly, Satan had to work through people. The instigation of heresy by the Prince of Darkness was only a warm-up; now he was sending his demonic agents directly to the people, and into people, giving them frightening powers to work evil.

The vague popular images of Satan's realm were elaborated by the publication of Dante's *Inferno* in 1312; and in 1348 came the most horrible calamity the Western world had ever known: the Black Death. In just three years, twenty million people died, most in agonizing pain; and by the end of the century fully one-third of the population of Europe had been wiped out by the bubonic plague. The social impact of the plague was tremendous. Its causes were unknown. For adherents to Revelation prophecy, the only explanation was in an alternate reading of that confusing millennial chapter, as contained in Verses 7 and 8: "When the thousand years are over, Satan will be let loose from his dungeon; and he will come out to seduce the nations in the four quarters of the earth and to muster them for battle. . . ." God had retreated, and Satan was consolidating his power on earth.

As in all persecutory movements, the Great Witch Hunt focused blame first on people so culturally different from the mainstream that allegations of conspiratorial intentions about them were credible. And such were ready at hand: the Jews, the "murderers of Christ." These were Satan's chosen agents.³ As the fantastic demonology developed, Jews were held to spread plague, to defile Christian sacraments in their dark Kabbalistic rituals, to kidnap Christian children for sacrifice to Satan, and so on. The witch mania built up momentum in subsequent centuries, engulfing, in rough order: Gypsies, homosexuals, eccentric widows or spinsters, bad-tempered or immoral women, the mentally or physically disabled, ordinary peasants of both sexes and all ages, and any targets of envy or spite; and moving inexorably up the social ladder until by the end of the sixteenth century no woman or man of any station or social class was immune from suspicion. Possibly over one million people were cruelly tortured and burned

(hanged, in England and America) as witches.

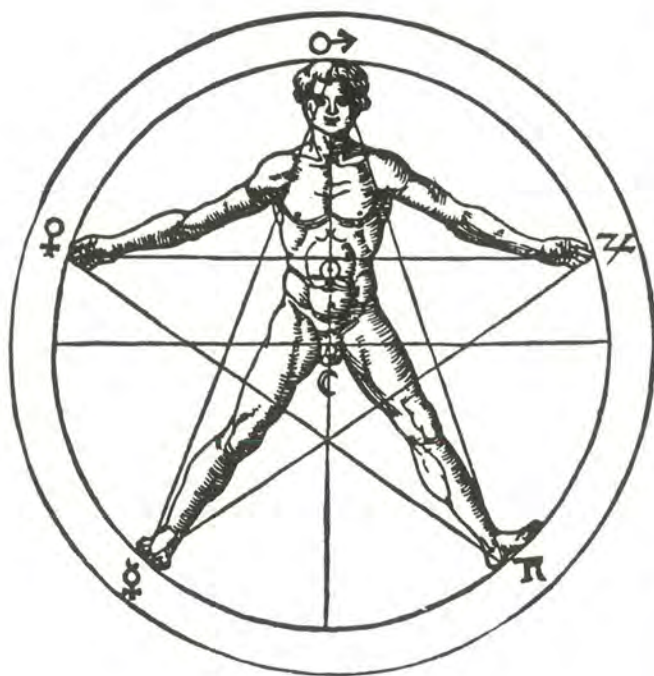
The demonology included the satanic pact (embodied in the Faust legend): the renunciation of Christ and the commitment to work for the establishment of Satan's kingdom on earth, in return for wealth and/or power. Witches were believed to fly, at great speeds, in human or animal form or invisibly, on horses or winged goats or broomsticks or under their own power. They flew directly to their targets, people or their immediate environments, and worked evil directly, without the aid of magic or spiritual agents. Or they could project their powers into animals, such as cats, who would go out in their stead. They would steal babies by the

In his 1986 summer sermons Pope John Paul II assured his flock that Satan is real, "tempting men to do evil . . . to turn them away from the law of God." And Cardinal John O'Connor's pronouncements about heavy-metal music and demon possession in March of this year further mobilized—and scared—Catholics.

bushel and meet other witches in orgiastic meetings called "sabbats" (the word for Jews' holy day) held in wild places, or in cemeteries where at midnight they would exhume corpse material for their evil potions; and there they would offer child sacrifices to, or have sexual relations with, Satan or his agent, who commonly appeared as a winged goat.

The complex demonology lost credibility in the Age of Reason and Baconian science of the eighteenth century, but it was replaced by new forms of occultism, including some of the elements of modern satanism, especially the Black Mass. This idea had developed out of speculation surrounding the establishment by Louis XIV, in 1679, of a secret commission to investigate charges of poisonings and sexual abuses levied against certain influential people, including some clergy. The room in which this investigative body sat was draped in black and lit with candles, hence the court's name: *Chambre ardente*. Elements in the folklore of the Black Mass included saying the mass over the naked body of a young girl (a virgin; Christ, remember, was conceived by a virgin) followed by copulation with her upon the altar, desecration of the sacraments, fouling the chalice with various human and animal fluids, and—of course—sacrificing children.

With the Industrial Revolution the church moved further and further away from its earlier concern with Satan and his demons (although the Roman ritual of exorcism remained on the books, as it does today), or with any inhabitants of an "invisible world," leaving all this in the realm of "superstition," or "the occult." But in the shadows of "the Gilded Age" of the late nineteenth century, elements of medieval and seventeenth-century demonology were resurrected, reinterpreted, and blended with products of imagination by a number of new "occult" groups. "Esoteric magic," with all sorts of fantastic frills, was the interest of secret societies



such as the Rosicrucians, the Order of the Temple of the Orient (OTO), and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Notable among occult leaders was Aleister Crowley, whose name is often invoked by occult dabblers today. Members included some noted writers: William Butler Yeats; Algernon Blackwood; Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton; Arthur Machen, whose tales of evil and horror would become popular later; and Bram Stoker, whose inspirations for *Dracula* are the subject of another body of folklore. Adherents claimed to have resurrected ancient *grimoires* (literally, "grammars"), guide-books to the invocation of hundreds of Satan's demons, which they "translated" and published. Their numerous occult formulas, like the earlier "magic circle," were replete with Hebrew script, often spelling out titles for God used as protective devices; and new power and mystery were ascribed to the *Kabbalah*. Portions of their incantations were expressed in Welsh, evoking supposed Druidic origins of some of their rituals. They were not bound by standards of modern scholarship, and so it is impossible to know how much of this stuff really was medieval or even seventeenth century, and how much was the creation of their own bizarre imaginations; but some of their works are being republished today.

Also during this time the notion developed that there really was a "witch cult" of enlightened pagans—almost exclusively women who revered a horned goatish figure—which had operated continuously in western Europe since Druidic times; and it was by serious misinterpretation of the harmless aims of such seekers of spiritual insight that the excesses of the Inquisitions were perpetrated. The best-known adherent to this view was Margaret Murray, whose 1921 book *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*⁴ was greatly influential in the early formative philosophies of some "neo-pagan" groups today. There is some evidence that a few wealthy eccentrics did dabble in the "occult" in the later Middle Ages, and devised rituals for the invocation of demons. But so widespread was the witchcraft fear, and so terrible the consequences for even highly placed suspects, that it is unlikely such practices were widespread. In any case, there is no good evidence for any long-lived "witch-cult." Neo-pagans (and feminists) today have outgrown Murray, but elements of her twisted reasoning have shaped our folklore of satanism.

What's happening today?

It's not very useful to say, as some pundits do, that "history repeats itself"; what we can say for sure is that similar social conditions produce similar cultural responses. In many respects, social conditions and sentiments today can be compared to those of the later Middle Ages. The citizenry of the world are being reminded constantly of severe social, economic, and environmental problems, and are being given dire predictions of a dismal near future, "if present trends continue." Openly concerned by Catholics' nonchalance over biblical apocalyptic prophecies, and by allegations of satanic cult activity, in his 1986 summer sermons Pope John Paul II assured his flock that Satan is real, "tempting men to do evil . . . to turn them away from the law of God." And Cardinal



Pentagrams. The top illustration shows the derivation of the "benign" pentagram, an emblem of modern paganism. It was a symbol of Renaissance humanism. The most famous was by Leonardo; this version was drawn by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535). Bottom: The "Satanic pentagram," popularized by Anton LaVey in his *Satanic Bible*. It seems not to be a medieval emblem; it may in fact have originated within this century. The Hebrew letters, starting at bottom and reading counter-clockwise, spell LEVYATAN, "Leviathan," the whale, master of the seas in Jewish folklore and symbolic of Hell in some medieval Christian art. But Leviathan had no part either in Kabbalah or in Christian occultism.

John O'Connor's pronouncements about heavy-metal music and demon possession in March of this year further mobilized—and scared—Catholics. For fundamentalist Christians, whose numbers have been increasing, there are signs aplenty that the *true* Millennium is coming soon, maybe only a decade from now: terrorism, drugs, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, AIDS, secular humanism, economic deterioration, poverty and homelessness, political corruption and ineptitude, social unrest, increased lawlessness, earthquakes, environmental disasters, radically changing weather patterns, and constant warnings from scientists and “experts.” For some—and we will surely see their numbers increase as we approach the year 2000—all these trends foreshadow the terror that is to come, as occurred with the trumpeting of the angels of Revelation 8 and 9. To be sure, such believers may always constitute a minority; but the Procter & Gamble affair and nationwide fear of satanic cults indicate a public that, for whatever reasons, is receptive to satanic demonology.

The folklore did not spring full-blown into the collective psyche; like the social conditions and perceptions listed above, it has antecedents that may be traceable directly to the 1950s and 1960s. It is revealing to regard it as having coalesced along with growing concern for, and perhaps adult guilt about, *the welfare of children*. Children became a central focus of national attention during the Vietnam-protest years of the early 1960s, and have stayed there since. Campus protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s; alternative religions and “cults” in the 1970s; intensifying fears over mysterious disappearances, or of kidnappings, or of run-away (or “throw-away”) kids in the early 1980s; and drug use, pregnancy, pornography, violence, and declining academic performance among our children have been wrenching concerns in our country for three straight decades. The satanic demonology was certainly fueled by the “legitimate” Satanism of Anton LaVey, and public misunderstanding of Wicca and other neopagan movements whose adherents called themselves witches; but it developed directly out of these concerns for children, and children are central to it. A strong catalyst was the publication in 1980 of the bizarre book *Michelle Remembers*, by Michelle Smith and her husband, psychiatrist Lawrence Pazder;⁵ later testimonies to participation in obscene rituals bear uncanny resemblance to those Michelle described. The demonology has many local variants, but the abduction, obscene abuse, killing, and cannibalism of children are common to all.

The “ritual child abuse” element of the demonology focused inevitably on child-care centers, which has culminated in the McMartin case. The treatment of Raymond Buckey and his mother and grandmother will have to be seen as a Great American Tragedy. Especially disturbing is that Michelle Smith was brought in to counsel the children, many of whom would testify in court.⁶ And we all should be outraged at the parallel but less well publicized New Jersey case of Margaret Michaels, convicted on 115 improbable counts of obscene child abuse, and sentenced in August 1988 to 45 years in prison.⁷

The satanic fear is spread by the media, especially by Geraldo Rivera and other sensation-mongers, and by a number



Procter & Gamble's “Moon and Stars” logo. Having evolved from crude dock-hands’ markings around 1851, the prototype was officially adopted in 1882. The thirteen stars represented the original colonies; the “man in the moon” was the friendly childhood motif. Beginning about 1982, rumors spread that it was a satanic emblem, and in April 1985 the company announced its withdrawal from all packaging. For Satan-hunters the number thirteen was anathema, and the five-pointed stars were “pentagrams,” witchcraft emblems (although modern “experts” cite occultists’ contentions that the pentagram with two points downward is benign; it is the inverted star with one point down, allegedly schematic of the horned and bearded goat head, that is evil). The twisted hair and beard are seen as representing horns—and the face appears unfriendly! Apparently some people have claimed that the stars can be connected to form three 6’s; others see “666” in the swirls of hair and beard. The fact that these numbers are reversed in the beard is seen as consistent with Satan’s practice of sending backward messages.

of “experts” who conduct “seminars” for law-enforcement, substance-abuse, and other professional groups. Some of them are police officers themselves, but few have actually investigated any cases of satanic crime; many gained their expertise by attending the seminars of others; and all spread dangerous misinformation.⁸ Some have pointed to African-American and Caribbean religious systems, such as *Vodoun* (“Voodoo”), *Santeria*, and *mojo*, as satanic; and I have heard references to “the Jews, the killers of Christ,” and “the Jewish bankers” in reports from students and colleagues who have attended such seminars.

Rational thinking is abandoned among audiences of the satanic hype. The numbers and nature of reports are incredible. Some say up to 60,000 ritual murders of children are committed each year. FBI voices, which assert that the total of *all* murders in the country is about 23,000 a year, are not heard. “Survivors” claim that the remains of sacrificial victims are cremated to destroy the evidence; rebuttals regarding the intensity and duration of heat necessary to reduce a body to ashes are not heard. And the most telling question of all is not answered. There are no precedents in the history of satanic demonology for many of the obscene acts allegedly committed by the “international network of satanic cults”: *Why* would anyone do these things?

CATCH UP ON WHAT YOU'VE MISSED!



FREE INQUIRY BACK ISSUES Use Card to Order.



A 20% discount will be given on orders of 5 or more copies of the same issue; 40% on orders of 10 or more.

Spring 1990, Vol. 10, no. 2—Rethinking the War on Drugs, *S. Wisotsky*; *T. Szasz*; An African-American Humanist Declaration; How Much Influence Can Humanism Have on Blacks? *N. Allen*; The Quest for Humanist Values, *I. Jaffree*; Black Athena: An Interview with Martin G. Bernal; The American Judiciary as a Secular Priesthood, *R. Taylor*; Are Humanists Optimists? *T. Madigan*; Reflections on the Democratic Revolutions of Our Time, *P. Kurtz*. **\$5.00**

Winter 1989/90, Vol. 10, no. 1—Interviews with Steve Allen and Paul MacCready; Moral Education: Homo Sapiens or Homo Religiosus? *W. Watters*; How to Raise an Entrepreneur, *R. Hiser*; Eupraxophy: The Need to Build Secular Humanist Centers, *P. Kurtz*; Neglected Reasons for Eschewing Public-School Prayers, *R. J. Hoffmann*; Religion in the Public Schools? *D. McKown*. **\$5.00**

Fall 1989, Vol. 9, no. 4—New Gods for Old: In Defense of Libertarianism, *R. W. Bradford*; The End of the Secular Century, *M. N. Rothbard*; Building Bridges to the Right: Libertarians, Conservatives, and Humanists, *E. Hudgins*; Making a Case for Socialism, *K. Nielsen*; Liberty and Democracy, or Socialism? *A. Flew*; Humanism and Socialism, *R. Schmitt*; Socialism is Incompatible with Humanism, *R. Sheaffer*; Militant Atheism Versus Freedom of Conscience, *P. Kurtz*; The Pseudo-Problem of Creation in Physical Cosmology, *A. Grünbaum*. **\$5.00**

Summer 1989, Vol. 9, no. 3—Interview with Sidney Hook on the Future of Marxism, *T. Machan*; The Case of "Ivan the Terrible," *J. Nickell* and *J. F. Fischer*; Don't Call Me Brother, *A. Miles* with *E. D. Cohen*; Humanism in the Black Community, *N. Allen*; The Marriage of Church and State in Ireland, *W. M. Grossman*; Separation of Church and State in Western Europe, *O. Andrysek*; Abortion or Adoption? The Moral Case Examined, *P. Kurtz*. **\$5.00**

Spring 1989, Vol. 9, no. 2—Can We Achieve Immortality? *C. Kahn*; A Humanist Looks at Cryonics, *S. B. Harris*; Eating the Forbidden Fruit, *P. Kurtz*; Scientific Knowledge, Moral Knowledge: Is There Any Need for Faith? *B. Davis*; The Inseparability of Logic and Ethics, *J. Corcoran*; A Theory of Cooperation, *L. Felkins*; Humanism and Morality, *T. Flynn*, *T. Franczyk*, *T. Madigan*; Glossolalia, *M. Gardner*; Abortion in Historical Perspective, *V. and B. Bullough*. **\$5.00**

Winter 1988/89, Vol. 9, no. 1—The Time Is Now, *G. Larue*; Active Voluntary Euthanasia, *D. Humphry*; The California Humane and Dignified Death Act, *R. L. Risley*; Euthanasia and the Doctor, *H. Kuhse*; Euthanasia in the Netherlands, *P. Admiraal*; The Struggle for Abortion Rights in Canada, *H. Morgentaler*; AIDS and the Twenty-First Century, *M. Krim*; Tim Madigan Interviews Steve Allen and Jayne Meadows. **\$5.00**

Fall 1988, Vol. 8 no. 4—A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics; Belief and Unbelief Worldwide: Faith Without Frontiers, *J. M. Allegro*; Perestroika and Humanism in China, *P. Kurtz*; Japanese Secularism: A Reexamination, *K. K. Inada*; Unity and Dissension in Islam, *A. H. Raoof*; Christian Soldiers March on Latin America, *M. Collett*; Misconceptions About Secular Humanism, *T. Madigan*; Woody Allen Interviews the Reverend Billy Graham. **\$5.00**

Summer 1988, Vol. 8, no. 3—Symposium: Entering Our New World—Humanism in the Twenty-First Century, *G. Allen*, *B. Bullough*, *V. Bullough*, *M. Bunge*, *J. Delgado*, *A. Ellis*, *R. Fairfield*, *A. Flew*, *L. Fragell*, *Y. Galifret*, *H. Hauptman*, *L. Kirkendall*, *M. Kohl*, *P. Kurtz*, *L. Kuhmerker*, *R. Lindsay*, *D. McKown*, *L. Mondale*, *J. Money*, *H. Morgentaler*, *J. C. Pecker*, *H. Radest*, *R. Rimmer*, *S. Stojanovic*, *H. Stopes-Roe*, *T. Taylor*, *E. O. Wilson*. **\$5.00**

Spring 1988, Vol. 8, no. 2—The First Easter, *J. K. Naland*; Is Religiosity Pathological? *A. Ellis*; Is Belief in the Supernatural Inevitable? *W. S.*

Bainbridge; The Narcissistic Guru, *R. O. Clarke*; Israel's Orthodox Jews: The New Holy War, *U. Huppert*; An Interview with Sherwin Wine; The Threat of Israel's Religious Right, *T. Flynn*; A Tale of Two Secular Humanisms: The Alabama Textbook Case, *R. D. Eliason*; The Resurrection Debate, *F. T. Miosi*. **\$5.00**

Winter 1987/88, Vol. 8, no. 1—Voices of Dissent within the Catholic Church, *F. X. Winters*; Humanism, Religion, and Authority, *D. C. Maguire*; The Vatican and the Catholic Couple, *R. Francoeur*; Catholicism and Change, *R. Basil*; Eupraxophy: Breaking with the Old Humanism, *P. Kurtz*; The Humanist Identity, *L. Fragell*; God and the Holocaust, *A. Grünbaum*; Psychic Astronomy, *M. Gardner*. **\$5.00**

Fall 1987, Vol. 7, no. 4—Special Issue: Fundamentalist Christian Schools—A National Scandal. The Truth and Consequences of Fundamentalist Christian Schooling, *A. Peshkin*; Reading, Writing, and Religion, *M. B. Gehrman*; Children Are Not Chattel, *K. Collins*; Selections from Fundamentalist School Textbooks; Is the Sexual Revolution Over? *P. Kurtz*, *R. Tielman*, and *S. Gordon*; Peter Popoff's Broken Window, *D. Alexander*; Human and World Care, *B. Spock*; Argument Without End, *M. Ruse*. **\$5.00**

Summer 1987, Vol. 7, no. 3—Japan and Biblical Religion, *R. Rubenstein*; Was the Universe Created? *V. Stenger*; Science-Fantasy Religious Cults, *M. Gardner*; The Relativity of Biblical Ethics, *J. E. Barnhart*; The Case Against Reincarnation (Part 4), *P. Edwards*; Personal Paths to Humanism: A Secular Humanist Confession, *J. Fletcher*; Free from Religion, *A. N. Gaylor*; Growing Up Agnostic in Argentina, *M. Bunge*; Tyranny of the Creed, *J. Allegro*. **\$5.00**

Spring 1987, Vol. 7 no. 2—Personal Paths to Humanism: What Religion Means to Me, *B. F. Skinner*; Biology's Spiritual Products, *E. O. Wilson*; Meeting Human Minds, *S. Allen*; An Evolutionary Perspective, *P. MacCready*; Testament of a Humanist, *A. Ellis*; Psychology of the Bible-Believer, *E. Cohen*; Biblical Arguments for Slavery, *M. Smith*; The Case Against Reincarnation (Part 3), *P. Edwards*. **\$5.00**

Winter 1986/87, Vol. 7, no. 1—The New Inquisition in the Schools, *P. Kurtz*; Naturalistic Humanism, *C. Lamont*; God and Morality, *S. Hook*; Anti-Abortion and Religion, *B. McCollister*; A Positive Humanist Statement on Sexual Morality, *R. Francoeur*; Unbelief in the Netherlands, *R. Tielman*; Dutch Humanism, *G. C. Soeters*; Belief and Unbelief in Mexico, *M. Mendez-Acosta*; The Case Against Reincarnation (Part 2), *P. Edwards*. **\$5.00**

Fall 1986, Vol. 6, no. 4—New Secular Humanist Centers, *P. Kurtz*; The Need for Friendship Centers, *V. Bullough*; Toward New Humanist Organizations, *B. Wisne*; Are Past-Life Regressions Evidence for Reincarnation? *M. Harris*; The Case Against Reincarnation (Part 1), *P. Edwards*; Protestantism, Catholicism, and Unbelief in Present-Day France, *J. Bousinesq*; More on Faith-Healing, *G. Larue*, *J. Randi*, *D. Alexander*, Richard Roberts's Healing Crusade, *H. Gordon*. **\$5.00**

Summer 1986, Vol. 6, no. 3—Special Issue: The Shocking Truth About Faith-Healing. Deceit in the Name of God, *P. Kurtz*; Peter Popoff's Ministry, *J. Randi*, *S. Schafersman*, *R. Steiner*; W. V. Grant's Faith-Healing Act Revisited, *P. Kurtz*; Further Reflections on Ernest Angley, *W. McMahon*, *J. Griffiths*; Salvation for Sale: An Insider's View of Pat Robertson's Organization, *G. Straub*; Belief and Unbelief Worldwide: Religious Skepticism in Latin America, *J. Gracia*; Science, Technology, and Ideology in the Hispanic World, *M. Bunge*. **\$5.00**

Spring 1986, Vol. 6, no. 2—Special Issue: Faith-Healing—Miracle or Fraud? The Need for Investigation, *P. Kurtz*; "Be Healed in the Name of God!" *J. Randi*; A Medical Anthropologist's View of American Shamans, *P. Singer*;

On the Relative Sincerity of Faith-Healers, *J. E. Barnhart*; Does Faith-Healing Work? *P. Kurtz*; God Helps Those Who Help Themselves, *T. Flynn*; The Effect of Intelligence on U.S. Religious Faith, *B. Beckwith*. \$5.00

Winter 1985/86, Vol. 6, no. 1 — Symposium: Is Secular Humanism a Religion? The Religion of Secular Humanism, *P. Beattie*; Residual Religion, *J. Fletcher*; Pluralistic Humanism, *S. Hook*; On the Misuse of Language, *P. Kurtz*; The Habit of Reason, *B. Blanshard*; An Interview with Adolf Grünbaum; Homer Duncan's Crusade Against Secular Humanism, *P. Kurtz*; Should a Humanist Celebrate Christmas? *T. Flynn*. \$5.00

Fall 1985, Vol. 5, no. 4 — Two Forms of Humanistic Psychology, *A. Ellis*; Grünbaum on Freud, *F. Sulloway*; Philosophy of Science and Psychoanalysis, *M. Ruse*; The Death Knell of Psychoanalysis, *H. J. Eysenck*; Looking Backward, *L. Nisbet*; New Testament Scholarship and Christian Belief, *V. Harvey*; The Winter Solstice and the Origins of Christmas, *L. Carter*. \$5.00

Summer 1985, Vol. 5, no. 3 — Finding Common Ground Between Believers and Unbelievers, *P. Kurtz*; Render Unto Jesus the Things That Are Jesus', *R. Alley*; Jesus in Time and Space, *G. Larue*; Interview with Sidney Hook on China, Marxism, and Human Freedom; Evangelical Agnosticism, *W. H. Young*; To Refuse to Be a God, *K. Arisian*; The Legacy of Voltaire (Part 2), *P. Edwards*. \$5.00

Spring 1985, Vol. 5, no. 2 — Update on the Shroud of Turin, *J. Nickell*; The Vatican's View of Sex, *R. Francoeur*; An Interview with E. O. Wilson, *J. Saver*; Parapsychology: The "Spiritual" Science, *J. Alcock*; Science, Religion and the Paranormal, *J. Beloff*; The Legacy of Voltaire (Part 1), *P. Edwards*; The Origins of Christianity, *R. J. Hoffmann*. \$5.00

Winter 1984/85, Vol. 5, no. 1 — Are American Educational Reforms Doomed? *D. McKown*; The Apocalypticism of the Jehovah's Witnesses, *L. Randle*; The Watchtower, *L. Lage*; Sentiment, Guilt, and Reason in the Management of Wild Herds, *G. Hardin*; Animal Rights Re-evaluated, *J. Simpson*; Elmina Slenker: Infidel and Atheist, *E. Jervey*; Humanism Is a Religion, *A. Bahm*; Humanism Is a Philosophy, *T. Vernon*; Humanism: An Affirmation of Life, *A. Bacard*. \$5.00

Fall 1984, Vol. 4, no. 4 — Point/Counterpoint, *P. Schlafly* and *S. Gordon*; Humanists vs. Christians in Milledgeville, *K. Saladin*; Suppression and Censorship in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, *D. Hackleman*; Who Profits from the Prophet? *W. Rea*; Keeping the Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls, *J. Allegro*; Health Superstition, *R. P. Doyle*; Humanism in Africa: Paradox and Illusion, *P. Kurtz*; Humanism in South Africa, *D. Sergeant*. \$5.00

Summer 1984, Vol. 4, no. 3 — Special Issue: School Prayer, *P. Kurtz*, *R. Lindsay*, *P. Buchanan*, *M. Twain*; Science vs. Religion in Future Constitutional Conflicts, *D. McKown*; God and the Professors, *S. Hook*; Armageddon and Biblical Apocalyptic, *P. Kurtz*, *J. E. Barnhart*, *V. Bullough*, *R. Helms*, *G. Larue*, *J. Priest*, *J. Robinson*, *R. Alley*; Is the U.S. Humanist Movement in a State of Collapse? *J. Dart*. \$5.00

Spring 1984, Vol. 4, no. 2 — Christian Science Practitioners and Legal Protection for Children, *R. Swan*; Child Abuse and Neglect in Ultrafundamentalist Cults and Sects, *L. Streiker*; The Foundations of Religious Liberty and Democracy, *C. Henry*, *P. Kurtz*, *E. Fortin*, *L. Nisbet*, *J. Fletcher*, *R. Taylor*; Biblical Views of Sex: Blessing or Handicap? *J. J. W. Baker*; Moral Absolutes and Foreign Policy, *N. Capaldi*; The Vatican Ambassador, *E. Doerr*; A Naturalistic Basis for Morality, *J. Kekes*; Humanist Self-Portraits, *M. I. Spetter*, *F. Matson*, *R. Kostelanetz*. \$5.00

Winter 1983/84, Vol. 4, no. 1 — Interview with B. F. Skinner; Was George Orwell a Humanist? *A. Flew*; Population Control vs. Freedom in China, *V. Bullough* and *B. Bullough*; Academic Freedom at Liberty Baptist College, *L. Ridenhour*; Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, *G. Smith*; The History of Mormonism and Church Authorities: Interview with Sterling M. McMurrin; Anti-Science: The Irrationalist Vogue of the 1970s, *L. Feuer*; The End of the Galilean Cease-Fire? *J. Hansen*; Who Really Killed Goliath? *G. Larue*; Humanism in Norway: Strategies for Growth, *L. Fragell*. \$5.00

Fall 1983, Vol. 3, no. 4 — The Future of Humanism, *P. Kurtz*; Humanist Self-Portraits, *B. Blanshard*, *B. Wootton*, *J. Fletcher*, *R. Firth*, *J.-C. Pecker*; Interview with Paul MacCreedy; A Personal Humanist Manifesto, *V. Bullough*; The Enduring Humanist Legacy of Greece, *M. Perry*; The Age of Unreason, *T. Vernon*; Apocalypse Soon, *D. Cohen*; On the Sesquicentennial

of Robert Ingersoll, *F. Smith*; The Historicity of Jesus, *J. Priest*, *D. R. Oppenheimer*, *G. A. Wells*. \$5.00

Summer 1983, Vol. 3, no. 3 — Special Issue: Religion in American Politics Symposium. Is America a Judeo-Christian Republic? *P. Kurtz*; The First Amendment and Religious Liberty, *L. Weicker*, *S. Ervin*, *L. Pfeffer*; Secular Roots of the American Political System, *H. S. Commager*, *D. Boorstin*, *R. Rutland*, *R. Morris*, *M. Novak*; The Bible in Politics, *G. Larue*, *R. Alley*, *J. Robinson*; Bibliography for Biblical Study. \$5.00

Spring 1983, Vol. 3, no. 2 — The Founding Fathers and Religious Liberty, *R. Alley*; Madison's Legacy Endangered, *E. Doerr*; James Madison's Dream: A Secular Republic, *R. Rutland*; The Murder of Hypatia of Alexandria, *R. Mohar*; Hannah Arendt: The Modern Seer, *R. Kostelanetz*; Was Karl Marx a Humanist? *S. Hook*, *J. Narveson*, *P. Kurtz*. \$5.00

Winter 1982/83, Vol. 3, no. 1 — Academic Freedom Under Assault in California, *B. Singer*, *N. Hardeman*, *V. Bullough*; The Play Ethic, *R. Rimmer*; Interview with Corliss Lamont; Was Jesus a Magician? *M. Smith*; Astronomy and the "Star of Bethlehem," *G. Larue*; Living with Deep Truths in a Divided World, *S. Hook*; The Strange Case of Paul Feyerabend, *M. Gardner*. \$5.00

Fall 1982, Vol. 2, no. 4 — An Interview with Sidney Hook at Eighty, *P. Kurtz*; Sidney Hook—A Personal Portrait, *N. Capaldi*; The Religion and Biblical Criticism Research Project, *G. Larue*; Biblical Criticism and Its Discontents, *R. J. Hoffmann*; Boswell Confronts Hume: An Encounter with the Great Infidel, *J. Frieman*; Humanism and Politics, *J. Simpson*, *L. Briskman*; Humanism and the Politics of Nostalgia, *P. Kurtz*; Abortion and Morality, *R. Taylor*. \$5.00

Summer 1982 Vol. 2, no. 3 — Special Issue: A Symposium on Science, the Bible, and Darwin. The Bible Re-examined, *R. Alley*, *G. Larue*, *J. Priest*, *R. Helms*; Darwin, Evolution, and Creationism, *P. Appleman*, *W. Mayer*, *C. Cazeau*, *H. J. Birx*, *G. Hardin*, *S. Tax*, *A. Flew*; Ethics and Religion, *J. Fletcher*, *R. Taylor*, *K. Nielsen*, *P. Beattie*; Science and Religion, *M. Novak*, *J. Blau*. \$5.00

Spring 1982, Vol. 2, no. 2 — A Call for the Critical Examination of the Bible and Religion; Interview with Isaac Asimov on Science and the Bible, *P. Kurtz*; The Continuing Monkey War, *L. Sprague de Camp*; The Erosion of Evolution, *A. Flew*; The Religion of Secular Humanism: A Judicial Myth, *L. Pfeffer*; Humanism as an American Heritage, *N. Gier*; The Nativity Legends, *R. Helms*; Norman Podhoretz's Neo-Puritanism, *L. Nisbet*. \$5.00

Winter 1981/82, Vol. 2, no. 1 — The Importance of Critical Discussion, *K. Popper*; Freedom and Civilization, *E. Nagel*; Humanism: The Conscience of Humanity, *K. Kolenda*; Secularism in Islam, *N. N. M. Ayubi*; Humanism in the 1980s, *P. Beattie*; The Effect of Education on Religious Faith, *B. Beckwith*. \$5.00

Fall 1981, Vol. 1, no. 4 — The Thunder of Doom, *E. Morgan*; Secular Humanists—Threat or Menace? *A. Buchwald*; Financing of the Repressive Right, *E. Roeder*; Communism and American Intellectuals, *S. Hook*; A Symposium on the Future of Religion, *D. Bell*, *J. Fletcher*, *W. S. Bainbridge*, *P. Kurtz*; Resurrection Fictions, *R. Helms*. \$5.00

Summer 1981, Vol. 1, no. 3 — Sex Education, *P. Scales*, *T. Szasz*; Moral Education, *H. Radest*; Teenage Pregnancy, *V. Bullough*; The New Book-Burners, *W. Ryan*; The Moral Majority, *G. Larue*; Liberalism, *E. Ericson*; Scientific Creationism, *D. McKown*; New Evidence on the Shroud of Turin, *J. Nickell*; Agnosticism, *H. J. Blackham*; Science and Religion, *G. Tomashevich*; Secular Humanism in Israel, *I. Hasson*; \$5.00

Spring 1981, Vol. 1, no. 2 — The Secular Humanist Declaration: Pro and Con, *J. Roche*, *S. Hook*, *P. Schlafly*, *G. Allen*, *R. Drummond*, *L. Nisbet*, *P. Buchanan*, *P. Kurtz*; New England Puritans and the Moral Majority, *G. Marshall*; The Pope on Sex, *V. Bullough*; On the Way to Mecca, *T. Szasz*; The Blasphemy Laws, *G. Stein*; The Meaning of Life, *M. Kohl*; Does God Exist? *K. Nielsen*; Prophets of the Procrustean Collective, *A. Flew*; The Madrid Conference, *S. Fenichel*; Natural Aristocracy, *L. Nisbet*. \$5.00

Winter 1980/81, Vol. 1, no. 1 — Secular Humanist Declaration; Democratic Humanism, *S. Hook*; Humanism: Secular or Religious? *P. Beattie*; Free Thought, *G. Stein*; The Fundamentalist Right, *W. Ryan*; The Moral Majority, *S. Gordon*; The Creation/Evolution Controversy, *H. J. Birx*; Moral Education, *R. Hall*; Morality Without Religion, *M. Kohl*, *J. Fletcher*; Freedom Is Frightening, *R. Fairfield*; The Road to Freedom, *M. Mihajlov*. \$5.00

Secular Humanist Bulletin

Back Issues of the *Secular Humanist Bulletin*, published quarterly and free with a subscription to FREE INQUIRY, are also available. Each additional copy is \$1.50, plus \$.50 for postage and handling. Discounts are available on bulk orders.

FREE INQUIRY • Box 5 • Buffalo, New York 14215-0005 • 716-834-2921

The hype has pervaded all educational and professional levels to the point where medical practitioners and clergy and generally scientifically principled scholars have accepted much of it as fact. And this, of course, makes careful research into the problem more difficult.

Whatever the social and psychological reasons might be for the credibility of the satanic folklore, it is obviously dangerous for many reasons. But possibly the greatest danger is that it distracts us (or *enables* us to be distracted?) from the real problems centering on our children, which are approaching a critical point.

There may be a tragic irony in the satanic demonology: Our society may in fact be producing a generation of satanic children.

Elsewhere⁹ I have delineated three levels of *real* referents in the popular meaning of "satanism": (1) The "hard core" includes "legitimate" Satanism, such as LaVey's Church of Satan and Michael Aquino's Temple of Set, and psychopathic, brutal killers who have adopted satanic associations, like Charles Manson, David Berkowitz, and Richard Ramirez. (2) "Dabblers" are mostly disturbed, rebellious, or just idle teenagers, who adopt outrageous dress or hair-styles and who may meet at "ritual sites," use drugs, and kill small animals. There have been some suicides and a few actual homicides committed by teenagers with satanic or other "occult" associations, and aspects of such cases are repeatedly cited by the Satan-hunters as evidence for their claims. A look behind the headlines, however, always reveals drugs and/or serious domestic problems. (3) Normal, healthy, curious students who like the game Dungeons and Dragons or heavy metal music, or who browse in books on "the occult."

Thousands of police man-hours and tens of thousands of taxpayers' dollars have failed to turn up any evidence at all of the ritual cult murders described in the demonology. The *only* evidence of anything like "satanic cult activity" is found in my second category; this should sound warning bells among responsible agencies and individuals all across the country.

Wading through the confusion of black dress and safety-pin jewelry, heavy-metal insignia, tattoos, and satanic graffiti to find some evidence of actual participation in "satanic cult activity" has been difficult, but by now there are sufficient data to draw a tentative picture of this new form of teenage club. Some kids actually do get together in abandoned buildings or forested areas, decorate their surroundings with occult graffiti, and conduct some sorts of concocted "rituals" over an "altar." Occasionally small animals are caught and killed, and the blood tasted by the participants. Far more often the activity is bloodless; drinking and sex are the main interests; the "rituals" soon become boring and the satanic fad passes. Almost invariably alcohol and other drugs are involved. Some observers of local scenes assert that drugs are to blame for everything, and that the satanic trappings are gimmicks used by drug pushers to ensure allegiance and a ready market.

Kids have been forming clubs, gangs, and "peer-groups" forever, motivated by normal affective needs. Rebellion against parental authority and values is also fairly normal in society,

an effort at resolving the confusion of adolescence. But kids who are drawn into "satanic" activities that involve deviant, cruel, or otherwise sociopathic behaviors are motivated by the same factors that send kids into "wilding" in New York or into violent gangs in Los Angeles, or into drugs, or into promiscuous sexual encounters. Some such extreme behaviors stem from mental illness, to be sure; but nearly all can be traced to seriously disrupted socialization; abuse or neglect; broken or alcoholic or violent homes; households run by a single working parent or where both parents very upwardly mobile, working full time; "spoiling"; lack of supervision; poor or nonexistent parent-child interaction; and so on. And such problems are worsening.

Behavioral scientists have known for decades, at least since anthropologist Earl Count described in 1958 the biosocial implications of sociality,¹⁰ that healthy development and longevity of the human organism depends on regular social interaction at all stages of its life. And psychologists since Freud have known the critical importance of responsible socialization at adolescence. Today many child-development specialists are worried that seriously disrupted socialization, compounded in many cases by the devastating effects of prolonged heavy drug use, will result in an entire generation of adults without a social conscience.

The implications of our neglect of children are profound. The social psychology of the whole satanic business is extremely complex, and there isn't room here to speculate on the factors that might contribute to the credibility of the demonology. But its smokescreen effect is clear. It is distracting us, it is distracting even child welfare professionals, from very real and very serious problems affecting our children. If "Satan" or "satanism" are metaphors for antisocial or asocial behavior ("sociopathic," in psychological jargon), then the direst predictions of the satanic conspiracy theorists may, indeed, be fulfilled.

Notes

1. The most detailed investigation of a "rumor panic" to date is that by Jeffrey S. Victor, "A Rumor-Panic about a Dangerous Satanic Cult in Western New York," *New York Folklore*, vol. XV, nos. 1 and 2, 1989, 23-49.

2. See Anson Shupe, "Pitchmen of the Satanic Scare," *Wall Street Journal*, March 9, 1990.

3. See Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews* (Yale University Press, 1943), published just before the world was to learn of the enormity of the next great anti-Jewish witch hunt.

4. Published by Oxford University Press. See Norman Cohn's *Europe's Inner Demons* (New York: Basic Books, 1975) for a thorough exposure of Murray's erroneous arguments, and for good common-sense discussion of Europe's various demonologies.

5. New York: Congden & Lattes.

6. See Tom Charlier and Shirley Downing, "Justice Abused: A 1980s Witch-Hunt," a six-part series on the history of the McMartin case, in the Memphis, Tenn., *Commercial Appeal*, January 17-22, 1988.

7. For a detailed examination of the Michaels case, see Dorothy Rabinowitz, "From the Mouths of Babes to a Jail Cell," *Harper's Magazine*, May 1990, 52-63.

8. See Anson Shupe, *op. cit.* And for the most comprehensive survey of the satanism problem, see Shawn Carlson and Gerald Larue, *Satanism in America* (El Cerrito, Ca.: Gaia Press, 1989).

9. Phillips Stevens Jr., "Satanism: Where are the Folklorists?" *New York Folklore* XV, 1-2, 1989, 1-22.

10. Earl Count, "The Biological Basis of Human Sociality," *American Anthropologist* 60 (1958), 1049-1085. •

An Impolite Interview with Paul Krassner

Tim Madigan

Paul Krassner is a political satirist and editor of the Realist. This interview was recorded the day after FREE INQUIRY's ninth annual conference in San Francisco, where Krassner performed his comedy routine.

The Realist is published quarterly (sort of). For information, write the Realist, Box 1230, Venice, California 90294.

TIM MADIGAN: How did last night's audience of secular humanists compare with your usual audiences?

PAUL KRASSNER: It was atypical. Usually I have an audience with disparate backgrounds and philosophies. Although the people at this conference have disparate backgrounds, they do share a common belief system. Or in this case, disbelief system. Because of that, they already have a sense of community, so I could start much further along than with an ordinary audience. For me, it was a special show.

MADIGAN: I noticed you didn't get any humanist hecklers.

KRASSNER: Because they were laughing. When you laugh, your defenses are down. So there's no need to compete.

MADIGAN: Do you adapt your routine to different audiences?

KRASSNER: Yes. My opening line was already an adaptation, to unite the audience. I told them that before the show I prayed, "Please God, help me to do a good show." The the voice of God boomed, "Shut up, you superstitious fool." I decided instinctively to set up the tension, make them think, "Is this guy a religious nut?" Then God's response united me with the audience. I didn't have to go through the singles-bar's approach to comedy—"How ya doin'?" "Where ya from?" "What d'ya do for a living?"

MADIGAN: I doubt that anyone in the audience thought you'd be a religious nut. Your reputation preceeds you. I notice that your humor is often subtle, and based upon your personal experiences. You seem to differ from the "bang-zoom" school of comedy.

KRASSNER: The comedy clubs today are like "Radio Shack" franchises. I covered the comedy convention in Las Vegas recently,

and for three days I watched seventy-four comedians on an assembly line. So many of them are molded upon the same role model. They become very clonish.

MADIGAN: This was the first time we had comedy at one of our conferences. There is a stereotype that humanists are extremely erudite, serious, somewhat uptight people. But they seemed to have a great time.

KRASSNER: Maybe it was from the release. They'd been listening all day to talks on life and death and the afterlife. The new question is not, Is there life after death, but, Is there life after birth?

MADIGAN: I loved you comment at the show: "How do we know that *this* isn't the afterlife?" I'm sure there were several members of the audience who seriously pondered that point for at least a few seconds.

KRASSNER: There was some sort of academic competition awhile back on different theories of the afterlife, and the guy who won said that the afterlife consists of a continuation of *this* life. This was a serious, scholarly paper! I said the same thing as a joke, and it got the biggest laugh of the night. That was a spontaneous remark, by the way. The audience likes to see creation on the stage—if not in evolution.

MADIGAN: Is a lot of your humor spontaneous, or do you have a set routine?

KRASSNER: Well, for last night's show, which lasted about an hour, I wrote down eight words on a piece of paper.

MADIGAN: Do you remember what they were?

KRASSNER: "Laugh," "dream," "Steve," "Abbie," "Psycho," "court," "New Age," and "Holly."

MADIGAN: What about "dwarf?"

KRASSNER: That was covered in "dream." This will be very abstract to your readers.

MADIGAN: I knew that once you started with your New Age jokes, you were home free.

KRASSNER: Yeah, but I think of myself as a missing link between humanism and the New Age. I have a foot in each camp. I understand that people's belief systems work for them. The secular humanists and New Agers have a lot in common—a strong sense of idealism, a desire for peace, and a concern for the ecology. So many things divide them, but I think it's a mistake for humanists to just pick on what they perceive as the silliness of Shirley MacLaine, without also exploring alliances. There are many New Agers who don't take crystals or channelers seriously, either. I'm very hard up for mystical experiences myself.

MADIGAN: Many people at the conference were familiar with your magazine the *Realist*, which you recently revived as a newsletter after many years. When was it originally printed?

KRASSNER: 1958-74.

MADIGAN: Let's go down memory lane and talk about those original years. I've read your compilation *The Best of the Realist* several times.

KRASSNER: In going through those sixteen years of issues to put that together, I remembered how much fun it was doing



it. I suspect that for you it was like exploring your cultural roots.

MADIGAN: Very much so. I sometimes lose touch with the history of free thought in the United States. There were freethinkers and rationalists fighting the same battles we are today back in 1948. Were you the first to publish Madalyn Murray O'Hair?

KRASSNER: As far as I know. The *Realist* ran an article by her called "Malice in Maryland," about her case to abolish prayer in school.

MADIGAN: How did you hook up with her?

KRASSNER: I saw an article that said she wanted to file suit for her fourteen-year-old son Bill to test the constitutionality of compulsory Bible-reading in public school. I contacted her and asked if she'd write an article for the *Realist*. She said she'd never written an article before, so I told her to just send me a letter telling what happened. I edited her first article out of three letters she sent me. There was a quality about her even then. She didn't seem worried about her image. She was very outrageous. There was something in her article about the virgin Mary not having orgasms.

MADIGAN: Another thing I noticed about early issues of the *Realist* were the many articles that were critical of the Catholic church.

KRASSNER: Well, the *Realist* started out in a time when church/state separation was one of the big taboos. So I published a lot of anticlerical material. When John Kennedy ran for president in 1960, that taboo was broken in the press. This freed the *Realist* to widen its base of potential satirical targets. There was a column I ran titled "The Tolerant Pagan," by James Curry. He was a Washington First Amendment lawyer, and his column was generally very anticlerical.

But he wrote, "Nixon said that to be president a person should sign a pledge saying that he believes in God, whereas Kennedy was quoted as saying that being a Catholic to him was like being cross-eyed; it was just something he was born with." So to Curry, Nixon was more dangerous than Kennedy.

MADIGAN: Sounds like George Bush today. There's a very humorous article in the *Best of the Realist*, done in comic book form, called "The Adventures of Churchman," by Bob Margolin and Mickey Gruber: "Mild-mannered Padre Peter in real life, when the pope sends out the church signal he becomes Churchman, defender of the righteous and downtrodden. With his faithful sidekick Altar Boy, he battled his archfoe, Freethinker." This would seem to have been especially radical stuff back in the 1950s.

KRASSNER: There was a woman from Dallas I was talking to here in San Francisco. She said that in her town she has to pretend she's something other than who she is, and coming to this conference is like a tremendous sense of community for her, to realize she's not the only Martian on the block. That's the sort of response I got with the *Realist*. The feedback I got was, "I thought I was the only one who perceived things this way!"

MADIGAN: Probably the most outrageous cartoon you ever ran was the one labeled "One Nation Under God."

KRASSNER: With the anthropomorphic deity bugging Uncle Sam. Yeah, there were a couple of people who complained about the homosexuality. They thought it should be the Statue of Liberty who was being screwed. I was constantly getting cancellations—even freethinkers were offended. "Freethinker" is a relative term. Even freethinkers have compartmentalizations.

MADIGAN: The *Realist* was described on its cover as a magazine of "free thought, criticism, and satire." How did you mean that?

KRASSNER: Well, atheism seemed like a negative term. It's like basing your life on not believing in Santa Claus. Plus, I knew that there was a free thought tradition in this country. By "free thought," I meant the questioning of all dogma and authority. But I wanted to combine it with satire. At that time, there was no humor magazine for adults. This was before the days of the *National Lampoon* or *Spy*, or comic strips like "Doonesbury" and "Bloom County." It was before television programs like "Saturday Night Live" or "Not Necessarily the News." There was *Mad* magazine for teenagers, but nothing for adults. So I had a clear field. No competition.

MADIGAN: How old were you when you founded it?

KRASSNER: Twenty-six. I was appealing to two different ends of the spectrum. On one end, there were the freethinkers, humanists, atheists, secularists, and on the other end were the beatniks, cultural absurdists like Lenny Bruce and Mort Sahl, and novelists like Joseph Heller and Terry Southern, and Ken Kesey, who was a cultural absurdist and a novelist. What they had in common was a love for satire. I would never label in the magazine whether an article was satire or journalism. That would be like Jonathan Swift saying, "I'm only kidding, folks, about those Irish babies being eaten." But I got a lot of criticism from people who thought I should label pieces as satire.

MADIGAN: I should point out that even though the *Realist* was a humor magazine, you did have serious pieces. How did you start the magazine? What had you done before that gave you the impetus to start it?

KRASSNER: It came out of my philosophy. I became an atheist when the atomic bomb was dropped. I had to reexamine my concept of God. I was thirteen.

I went through my bar mitzvah just to please my parents, so in that sense it was an act of altruism. But I don't separate altruism from selfishness. I was being selfish because if they had a vested interest in my bar mitzvah, then I'd have to live with their disappointment if I didn't go through with it.

I became involved in the free thought movement, and eventually ended up as managing editor of the *Independent*, which was edited by Lyle Stuart. He was my first real mentor, friend, and guru all in one. He was also the general manager of Entertaining Comics, the publisher of *Mad* magazine, so I started doing some stuff for them. A lot of stuff I'd give them was considered too adult. Around this time there was an article in *Esquire* magazine called "American Needs a *Punch*," *Punch* being the British humor magazine. So that really convinced me that I should not publish the standard anti-religious magazine. It had to represent something that would be fun, and that presented alternative points of view. I was trying to do what Mort Sahl and Lenny Bruce were doing in the nightclub atmosphere.

MADIGAN: What was your readership base?

KRASSNER: I first sent out a solicitation to the mailing list of the *Progressive World*, a freethought magazine. They had 3,000 subscribers and six hundred responded. I offered them their money back if they didn't like the first issue. Luckily, it was a good

MOVING?
Make sure
FREE INQUIRY
follows you!

Name _____

Subscriber # _____

New address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Old address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: **Free Inquiry, Box 5, Buffalo NY 14215**

first issue.

MADIGAN: Was there anything incredibly shocking in it?

KRASSNER: No, not yet. There were a couple of bawdy poems in the first issue that upset a few secularists. But I didn't have to answer to anyone—not an organization, or publisher, or advertisers, or even the readers, except that the readers trusted me not to compromise. One of my favorite letters was from some guy who said, "I read your stuff that offends other people and enjoy it. Then I read the stuff that offends me, and I've learned to enjoy that, too." The way readership grew was through word of mouth. Steve Allen was the first subscriber, and he sent a whole bunch of gift subscriptions to people, Lenny Bruce among them. Then these people sent subscriptions to a whole bunch of other people.

MADIGAN: How did you come up with the name "the *Realist*"?

KRASSNER: I was searching for names, and a suggestion to call it the *Realist* was sent in by F. F. Wertman, who was like the village atheist in Albany, Georgia. He was a columnist for the *Progressive World*, and was an environmentalist before his time. He would re-ink his own typewriter ribbons, and cured himself of cancer with some sort of grape diet. Anyway, the minute I saw that article, it had the right feeling to it. The line between reality and satire is getting more and more blurred. It was a good cover for satire, as they say in the spy business.

MADIGAN: Did you find that your readership changed over the years? Did fewer freethinkers and more bohemian types start subscribing in the 1960s?

KRASSNER: Well, they were all a part of the cultural fringe. I see them all as different shades in the spectrum of counterculture. So, while their style of dress or professional bearing was different, they had in common the questioning of authority.

MADIGAN: There's an interview in *The Best of the Realist* with the late Buddhist scholar Alan Watts, where you ask him what advice he'd give to different groups:

Krassner: "What message would you give to Christians?"

Watts: "Come off it."

Krassner: "What message would you give to scientists?"

Watts: "Dream."

Krassner: What message would you give to freethinkers?"

Watts: "Don't be so compulsive."

Krassner: "Compulsive about what?"

Watts: One can emphasize freedom in such a way as to be bound by it."

Krassner: "Could you give a specific example?"

Watts: "Yes. If you wouldn't be seen

dead darkening a church door, you might have a closed mind."

KRASSNER: I'm glad you mentioned that. Robert Anton Wilson and I interviewed Watts in a Spanish restaurant in New York City. That particular section of the interview was kind of a test. I asked him to expand on the freethinker question because I was asking it from the point of view of a freethinker. A scientist might have asked, "What do you *mean*, dream?"

MADIGAN: You write that your interview with Albert Ellis lost you more subscribers than any other article.

KRASSNER: Up to that point. And mainly because of one section, where we talked about the semantics of profanity. Ellis said that fucking is a *good* thing, and if you want to say something nasty to a person, you should say, "Unfuck you." This was just a few inches in a very long scholarly interview. But at that time, magazines were still using asterisks to mark forbidden words. And some people got aroused by asterisks! In fact, that still goes on. When Oliver North said, "The old man loves my ass," the *New York Times* said that "Colonel North claimed that he was in the president's good graces." At any rate, my printer refused to print the Ellis interview until I brought a note from my lawyer saying that the Supreme Court had ruled that for something to be obscene, it had to arouse prurient interest.

MADIGAN: And some readers were offended?

KRASSNER: It's just that compartmentalization I was talking about earlier. It's ironic, especially for freethinkers, because they want to demystify things, yet they allow the magic of a combination of letters to have a spell on them and actually produce a physical reaction. They're smart enough to know it's just their own conditioning, but they still don't like it. But that's not all they got upset about with the interview. Ellis was pretty progressive in his sexual mores. He spoke about masturbation, premarital sex, and incest—all the stuff that TV talk-shows are made of today.

MADIGAN: There's a powerful interview you did with an abortionist, back when abortion was still illegal.

KRASSNER: That was in 1962. I went beyond the ordinary limits of journalism because of that interview, and became an underground abortion referral service, simply because I got calls from my subscribers. Even nurses didn't know where to go for an abortion. I asked if I could refer people to him, and he said yes. Women were calling me about their lateness problem, and they weren't talking about their subscriptions.

MADIGAN: Could you have been prosecuted for doing that interview?

KRASSNER: Well, it was done anonymously. But I wouldn't have revealed my source. I told him I'd go to jail to protect his identity. That didn't happen, but when I became a referral service I got called before two District Attorneys. I refused to cooperate, but they didn't prosecute anyway. I didn't fit the profile—I wasn't taking any money for it. So I think they didn't want to prosecute me more out of public relations than justice. But I was prepared to go to trial and tell the jury what my choice was, to let a woman go to a back-alley butcher or to this doctor, who was known as "the Saint"—Robert Spencer in Ashland, Pennsylvania. He's dead now. He was a jolly old freethinker.

MADIGAN: It's still a powerful interview to read.

KRASSNER: Because of the parallels. Women who have only known legalized abortion are shocked that it can be overturned. We'll find out if *Roe v. Wade* will be reversed when Sandra Day O'Connor reveals whether she's a Catholic or a woman first.

MADIGAN: You're a true iconoclast. You even shake at the pillars of free thought.

KRASSNER: Yes, I was trying to poke fun of things I'm a part of myself. You can make fun of things without loving them any the less. And if all it takes is humor to knock something down, it's not very strong in the first place. My job is to break through the role-playing and find out what people have in common. That's why I get upset by what I call "fascist comedy," where people use stereotypes that serve to divide rather than unite—whether it's antigay humor, anti-Russian humor, antiwoman. But I guess that's the risk of democracy, to have Polish jokes. "That's what our boys fought and died for."

MADIGAN: What do you think about the War on Drugs?

KRASSNER: Great propaganda. A good excuse to invade other countries and develop a police state here. The government needs to make arbitrary distinctions between legal and illegal drugs in order to extend its power. But drug users in jail are really political prisoners. Oops—I hope I haven't offended anyone.

MADIGAN: And I hope the *Realist* will continue to offend many more people for years to come.

KRASSNER: I got a letter once that said: "How come the *Realist* hasn't said anything to offend me lately?" I put in an editor's note: "You're not worth offending," figuring that might do the trick. ●

Thomas Aquinas's Complete Guide to Heaven and Hell

Ronald A. Lindsay

Contemporary religion is such a disappointment. Any believer will promise that if you accept a particular dogma you will be immortal and live in paradise. Fine. But what is it like to live in heaven? At this point we either get a shrug of the shoulders or some unilluminating assurance, like "I don't know, but it's great."

And it is no use asking theologians for more specific information. Contemporary religious leaders will reassure you that your soul, your "glorified" body, or some recognizable facsimile thereof will live forever, but they are conspicuously short on the details of eternal life. Hans Küng has devoted a considerable amount of print to arguing that it is reasonable to believe in eternal life—but when he actually had to describe it he stated that it is "beyond the dimension of space and time, in God's invisible, imperishable, incomprehensible domain." Thanks, Hans.

But one theologian did not hesitate to give us a complete picture of the hereafter: Thomas Aquinas. As those who have had the benefit of a Catholic education know, Aquinas was nothing if not comprehensive. That is why his famous works are called "summas." And in the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas tells us everything we always wanted to know about the afterlife.

Herewith, a summary of Aquinas's detailed description of the afterlife.

It's the real thing

One of the problems that has always bedeviled (sorry, I couldn't resist) theologians is to explain how the soul, an immaterial, spiritual entity, can suffer from the fires of hell. After the resurrection of your body, there is no problem: your nerve endings come with you. But the resurrection will not occur until the final judgment. What happens in the meantime?

Some theologians have contended that the fire in hell prior to the final judgment is not a real, material fire but a spiritual

fire that will affect the soul. Others have asserted that the soul's awareness of the fire would by itself induce suffering through the apprehension it would cause.

Aquinas refuses to take the easy way out. Scripture assures us that it is a real fire, and souls are not dumb. They are not going to fear a flame that does not cause them distress. (Remember that those crafty devils are spirits too.)

Aquinas explains that even though a soul cannot be affected by anything material, it can be united to something material—your body for example. Thus, the souls in hell are united to the fires of hell. Big deal, you say? Well, not only is your soul united to the fire, it is confined by the fire. You cannot move. (Claustrophobics are really going to be in distress.) Says Aquinas, "the corporeal fire is enabled as the instrument of the vengeance of Divine justice thus to detain a spirit, and thus it has a penal effect on it, by hindering it from fulfilling its own will."

Wait, you say, what about the devils who tempt us? They are obviously free to move about. Wrong. It is only occasionally that "the souls of the damned are . . . outside hell . . . by Divine permission, either for the instruction or for the trial of the elect." Moreover, when God allows demons to go on furlough, they take their flames with them, as a reminder of their torment. (Wake up and smell the brimstone, people!)

Here comes the judge!

Let's face it. Souls are boring. We should move on to the final judgment and resurrection.

Will there be any special phenomena indicating that Jesus is coming to judge us?

Yes and no. Because scripture assures us that the exact date of the final judgment will not be revealed, the only unmistakable signs will occur immediately before the event. But since Jesus is coming as a judge, Aquinas is positive there will be signs of his coming, however useless they may be in terms of advance warning. In an answer sure to be pleasing to members of the judiciary, Aquinas asserts that "it pertains to the dignity of the judicial power to have certain

signs that induce people to reverence and subjection, and consequently many signs will precede the advent of Christ when He shall come to judgment."

Twilight's last gleaming

Although the date of the last judgment will not be known to us in advance, Aquinas is certain of the time of day in which it will take place: twilight. Why? "Christ's resurrection was at night." Moreover, we can specify "that it will be towards the twilight, the moon being in the east and the sun in the west, because the sun and moon are believed to have been created in these positions, and thus their revolutions will be altogether completed by their returns to the same point."

Standing room only

You say the last judgment cannot possibly occur at twilight because, as a result of the earth's rotation, it will only be twilight on a small portion of the earth's surface.

Although Aquinas was probably not aware of the earth's rotation, he anticipated your objection anyway. Everyone is going to be gathered together for the last judgment at the valley of Josaphat. Why? Because Jesus "ascended into heaven from Mount Olivet, which overlooks the valley of Josaphat, [therefore] He will come to judge in the neighborhood of that place."

Don't trust anyone over (or under) thirty

You are 127 years old. Your body barely functions. Why would you want it to be resurrected and preserved forever?

No problem. After the resurrection everyone is going to be thirty years old. As Aquinas explains, we will "rise again at the most perfect state of nature," which is "the age of youth." Moreover, "Christ rose again of youthful age, which begins about the age of thirty years."

Short people have no reason to live

On the other hand, if you have always hated being too short (or too tall), you will continue to be bothered by your height after the resurrection. We will not have a uniform height because "the nature of the individual will not be altered at the resurrection," and "quantity results from each individual's nature."

However, Aquinas apparently could not

Ronald A. Lindsay is an attorney practicing in Washington, D.C.

accept the possibility of dwarfs in paradise. So he hedged by saying that "if the formative power on account of some defect was unable to effect the due quantity that is befitting the species, the Divine power will supply the defect at the resurrection, as in dwarfs."

There is good news . . .

You will not have to worry about pay toilets or body odor after the resurrection. Bodily wastes are "superfluities" and "will not rise again with the body."

This may seem like an easy issue to resolve, but remember that Aquinas was Mr. Natural. Everything, including the parts of your body, has a certain natural purpose and the frustration of the natural purpose would be inconsistent with God's goodness.

Consider your bowels. They cannot be resurrected "full, since thus they contain impurities, nor empty, since [they are not] empty in nature." Aquinas obviously had to think long and hard about the solution to this dilemma, but he finally arrived at the answer. Your bowels "will rise again in the body even as the other members, [but] they will be filled not with vile superfluities but with goodly humors."

. . . and bad news

No sex. No restaurants. Not even a candy bar.

The purpose of sex is procreation. (You knew that already, right?) "But in the state of the resurrection the human race will already have the number of individuals preordained by God."

Furthermore, "eating is directed to make up for waste," but after the resurrection there will be no more waste. (See above.)

The conclusion is inescapable. After the last judgment and resurrection, "the acts of the generative and nutritive powers would be void of purpose."

Objections?

Eternal life is supposed to be pleasurable, at least for the elect. Sex and eating are (usually) pleasures, are they not?

Aquinas concedes that "there is much pleasure in the act of the generative and nutritive powers," but the pleasures of the body are merely "medicinal, because they are applied to man for the removal of weariness." Consequently, "it does not follow that such pleasures as these belong to the perfection of beatitude . . . none but spiritual pleasures are pleasures simply, and to be sought for their own sake."

What about the biblical passages indicating that Jesus ate and drank with his disciples after his resurrection? He was faking it. "His

eating was an act . . . to prove that He had resumed the true human nature." Of course there will be no need of such proof after we are all resurrected.

And don't expect to play with Fido, either

Pets and plants will not be resurrected. "Animals and plants were made for the upkeep of human life." Accordingly, "when man's animal life ceases, animals and plants should cease."

So what do we do on a Saturday night?

Aquinas discusses two activities of the blessed. One is contemplating God. (See below.) The other is looking at the damned.

The latter may not seem very pleasurable to anyone who is not a fan of horror films, but Aquinas assures us that the saints "will rejoice in the punishment of the wicked." Of course, they do not rejoice in it "as such," but by considering therein the order of Divine justice and their own deliverance, which will fill them with joy."

In other words, the blessed will become happy by looking at the damned and thinking, "better them than us."

Skeptics should live in Scandinavia

Speaking of the damned, all unbelievers are destined for hell. It matters not whether you have lived decently; your "works of mercy" will be of no avail. Accordingly, you may be interested in some further detail on your eternal destiny.

I have read somewhere that there is a practice among some Finns of toughening their bodies for their harsh climate by sitting in a sauna and then running outside to take a plunge in icy water. Hell is something like this, only much worse. Aquinas disabuses us of the notion that fire will be our sole punishment. "All the elements [will] conduce to the torture of the damned." The damned "will pass from the most intense heat to the most intense cold, without . . . any respite."

By the way, in case you want your mail forwarded, hell is at the center of the earth. Worry not; there will be room for everyone, as it is not "unreasonable that God's power should maintain . . . a hollow great enough to contain all the bodies of the damned."

Some are more equal than others

The blessed want to succeed, not just survive.

Don't pat yourself on the back if you make it to heaven; you are not one of the

celestial upper class unless you have an "aureole," or halo.

You may have thought that halos were granted to everyone in heaven. On the contrary, "the aureole is a crown awarded not to all, but especially to some."

If this seems like an insignificant detail to you, it was not to Aquinas. Aquinas devoted thirteen separate articles to the discussion of "aureoles." Here are their titles:

- (1) Whether the aureoles differ from the essential reward? (2) Whether they differ from the fruit? (3) Whether a fruit is due to the virtue of continence only? (4) Whether three fruits are fittingly assigned to the three parts of continence? (5) Whether an aureole is due to virgins? (6) Whether it is due to martyrs? (7) Whether it is due to doctors? (8) Whether it is due to Christ? (9) Whether to the angels? (10) Whether it is due to the human body? (11) Whether three aureoles are fittingly assigned? (12) Whether the virgin's aureole is the greatest? (13) Whether one has the same aureole in a higher degree than another?

As suggested by the foregoing titles, Aquinas considered whether halos would be granted to virgins, martyrs, and doctors. The answer, in all three cases, is yes. "Doctors," incidentally, does not refer to physicians but to theologians; that is, someone like Aquinas.

Probably just a coincidence.

The main event

The principal activity of the blessed is contemplating God. It is the "vision of the Divine essence, wherein their bliss consists chiefly." The blessed will not actually "see" God with their eyes, because God is "supremely incorporeal." It is the intellect of the blessed that will enjoy the beatific vision. "The intellect can perceive spiritual things whereas the eyes of the body cannot: wherefore the intellect will be able to know the Divine essence united to it, but the eyes of the body will not."

The mechanism by which the intellect of the blessed will "perceive" God is not adequately explained, but then Aquinas never had the opportunity to watch *Star Trek*. Presumably, the beatific vision is something like Mr. Spock's Vulcan mind-probe.

And after a zillion years of beatific vision, no doubt the saints will turn to one another and say, "Are we having fun yet?"

There you have it. Thanks to Aquinas you will not be surprised; as the U.S. Customs Service advises, "Know before you go."

Skepticism and Happiness

Marvin Kohl

Skepticism can range from a complete and total disbelief in everything; to Humean skepticism, which maintains that individuals cannot ever obtain knowledge about any subject matter beyond the relationship of their ideas or sense-data; to the kind of over-belief that claims we should always disbelieve what is false and that, where we do not have sufficient supporting data, we ought to suspend judgment. I refer to the latter kind of doubt as agnostic skepticism or simply as skepticism, and will be content to limit this analysis to this species of disbelief.

Bertrand Russell, one of the great patrons of rationalism and secular humanism, was an agnostic skeptic. If only men could be brought into a tentatively agnostic frame of mind, he writes,

nine-tenths of the evils of the modern world would be cured. War would become impossible, because each side would realize that both sides must be wrong. Persecution would cease. Education would aim at expanding the mind, not at narrowing it. Men would be chosen for jobs on account of fitness to do the work, not because they followed the irrational dogmas of those in power. Thus rational doubt alone, if it could be generated, would suffice to introduce the millennium.¹

What is this wonderful thing that would initiate a period of prevailing virtue and happiness? What is skepticism? And why do skeptics consider it the height of wisdom to place stringent limits on what can be rationally believed?

I believe that Russell's skepticism is a complex notion involving several distinct claims and not always even referring to the same subject matter. Yet several things are clear. First of all, he does not advocate an absolutist's position. For example, he does not claim, as W. K. Clifford does, that "it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence."² Russell seems to have understood that if it is wrong, presumably everywhere and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence and

if, as the facts reveal, we have insufficient evidence for believing this, then agnostic skeptics must reject their own meta-belief. The apparent paradox is that, if the absolutist's version of agnostic skepticism is true, then intellectual integrity requires that it be cast aside.

But Russell's position cannot be taken by this argument, since he does not hold that *all* beliefs are subject to the skeptic's sword. In a 1904 letter, he clearly distinguishes between propositions that may be fairly allowed to be self-evident and propositions that ought to have proofs if they are to be accepted. In other words, Russell appears to hold that certain foundational beliefs aside, it is wrong to believe anything upon insufficient evidence. He thought the letter sufficiently important to quote it at length in the first volume of his autobiography. In this early and rather remarkable letter Russell writes that "truthfulness demands as imperatively that we should doubt what is doubtful as that we should disbelieve what is false."³

Perhaps the clearest and most ardent contemporary spokesperson for this form of skepticism is Paul Kurtz, who reminds us that "whatever else he may be, the humanist is, at root, a skeptic."⁴

The skeptical person asks for proof and demands evidence; he tests claims by how well they work out in practice. His antidote for the original sin [of gullibility] is critical analysis. . . . [Most important, the skeptic maintains that] where we do not have sufficient supporting data, we ought to suspend judgment. We should be doubtful of whatever has not been adequately verified.⁵

For the skeptic, then: Truthfulness demands that we only believe something to be true when the claim is supported by reliable evidence. It also demands as imperatively that we should doubt what is doubtful as that we should disbelieve what is false. The first statement is true but tautological. The second may be true and also tautological if truthfulness necessarily includes a richer notion of intellectual integrity. The difficulty is this: even if truthfulness demands that we be skeptics, it does not follow that happiness demands the same thing.

Great ideals may, and often do, conflict. Truthfulness may command that where there is insufficient or no evidence, one ought to disbelieve or at least suspend belief, while happiness may command much less. If we distinguish between affective (psychological) and the reflective (judgmental) modes of happiness,⁶ then affective happiness often demands little by the way of truth. Affective happiness, one might say, is inextricably disposed to love illusion and delusion. If we also



Marvin Kohl is professor of philosophy at the State University of New York College at Fredonia.

distinguish between individual and universal categories of happiness, then this may clarify the nature of the dispute between the skeptic and more ardent believer but in itself does little to alleviate the worry that, even when we move from individual and affective life-satisfaction to universal and judgmental life-satisfaction, happiness does not become as stringent an intellectual mistress as skeptics would have us believe.

Does happiness require that we be skeptics?⁷ In other words, is it true to say that happiness demands, aside from foundational beliefs, that we only believe something to be true when the claim is supported by reliable evidence and that happiness also demands as imperatively that, aside from foundational beliefs, we should doubt what is doubtful as that we should disbelieve what is false?

I suggest that these statements may be false, or are at least doubtful, because evidence indicates that many of the ingredients which make for individual human happiness require that we do *not* believe it is wrong to believe anything upon insufficient evidence. Expressed positively, there is evidence to show that many of the more vital and happier people give full assent to propositions, including beliefs about hope and self-worth, without having sufficient warrant from what may be called reality.

Shelley Taylor and Jonathan Brown argue that there is a substantial amount of evidence indicating that *some* illusions (and I suspect *some* false beliefs) promote mental health, including the ability to be happy.⁸ They suggest that unrealistic views—including the belief that one controls what is indeed uncontrollable and the having of a mild unrealistic optimism—may be necessary factors for happiness and contentment, the ability to care for others, and the capacity for creative productive work. They also suggest that unhappiness often seems to be correlated with having too much of a commitment to truthfulness. For example, Taylor and Brown maintain that mildly depressed individuals or those with low self-esteem are *less likely* to be dependent upon illusion and *more likely* to have more accurate self-perceptions. Or to state this more provocatively and in our own language, healthy and happy people are more likely to be dependent upon illusion and less likely to be across-the-board agnostic skeptics.

This empirical claim cannot be easily dismissed. The argument it suggests may be telling if we add the premise that happiness is an overriding good. It may be telling if in the short *and* long run, happiness requires that we reject not only the extreme form of skepticism but those positions which maintain that certain foundational beliefs aside, it is wrong to believe anything upon insufficient evidence. Or when viewed from a different moral perspective, a related argument against the more strident forms of skepticism may be telling if there is a need to be deceived in certain strategic psychological areas and if the violation of this need, in balance, results in greater human ill-being and suffering.

There are those, I suppose, who fancy that my emphasis on certain strategic psychological needs, specifically the need to have hope and a strong sense of self-worth together with their corresponding beliefs, represents a departure from

skepticism and, therefore, from humanism. Nothing could be further from the truth. What we need to vividly recall is that humanism does not solely rest on epistemological grounds. It has two major foundations: love and knowledge. And this love is not merely egoistic love. It is true that since a creature must live before it can act, the acts by which each maintains his or her own life must generally precede in imperativeness all other acts. But from this it does not follow that a person would place his or her own happiness or other interests above that of all other persons. Nor does it follow that we have a positive moral obligation to distribute goods, wherever possible, first to oneself and second, where possible, to our fellow humans who are in need and within range of our activities. This, at bottom and in practice, is nothing more than an insouciant but cleverly disguised closet form of radical egoism. What follows is that if there are duties to self, we have a positive moral obligation to distribute *vital goods*, wherever possible, first to oneself. And that in other areas we may be morally required to make our greatest possible contribution to the overall good.

To love humanity is to be actively concerned about protecting and increasing what makes for human happiness. If love, not epistemology, comes first and if the nature of the universe is presently such that happiness requires a mixture of true and palliative beliefs, then a humanism properly understood requires a less narrow and more carefully modified form of skepticism. For me humanism is a system of thought and action, a proto-theory that makes human welfare and happiness the measure and end of all moral and political endeavors. "Welfare" here roughly means the minimal satisfaction and protection of the means of satisfying basic needs and correlate interests, as well as the fundamental interests a society would want to protect if it were inspired by love and were fully rational. Correspondingly, "individual happiness" means the more durable forms of life-satisfaction that results from both the appreciation and attainment of reasonable and progressive success in meeting these needs and their correlating interests over a significant period of time or over a lifetime. If this is true, then it is part of wisdom to note that happiness requires a more humane skepticism, which does not attack certain foundational and vital psychological beliefs.

To sum up: If we dare speak of such a powerful marriage, truthfulness and happiness seem to require that, aside from certain foundational and vital psychological beliefs, we should always disbelieve what is false and that, where we do not have sufficient supporting data, we ought not give full assent to, or ought to doubt, the proposition in question.

I do not mean to suggest that this ends a needed inquiry as to the limits of skepticism and what it may be rational to believe when full supporting data are not available. There are other questions of considerable importance. Why are certain foundational and psychological beliefs and not others acceptable, and upon what grounds? Why it is important to distinguish, as I think we must, between not giving full assent to a proposition and doubting that proposition? And why will this narrowing of the scope of skepticism not necessarily result in a dangerous slide into credulity or gullibility?

It is not my intent to answer these questions. Instead I am content to suggest that, since we are still in a very early, if not primitive, stage of understanding the proper limits of belief, our claims about ethical or warranted belief should be proportionately modest; that wisdom suggests that we avoid the dogmas of skepticism as well as the dogmas of metaphysical or religious belief; and that if doxastic responsibility requires examining the consequences of belief, as I believe it does, then the results of skepticism are reasons for believing or not believing in skepticism.

It may be said that I have begged an important question: that the evidence will indicate that in the short and long run human happiness does require that it is wrong to believe anything upon insufficient evidence; that credulity and gullibility are contagious; that unless these demons are forcefully constrained, our powers of self-control, of doubting, of judiciously and fairly weighing evidence are dangerously and irreversibly weakened. Critics may also urge that enduring virtue and happiness cannot be taught by teaching falsehood, illusion, or half-belief; that the ardent love of truth is the basis of all real happiness, and that a happiness based upon lies can only do harm. For no good cause is ever served by the suppression of truth. Critics probably would add that most, if not all, of what passes for psychological illusion is merely immediate and short-term appeasement which cannot, on balance, provide for long-term stable happiness. And the more zealous would urge that a happiness based upon what are essentially comforting lies "cannot in any way be a true happiness."⁹

I am tempted to say that these are eulogistic phrases resorted to in behalf of skepticism as dogma. But that, no doubt, is too harsh. What we are in fact being told is that the possible future utility of the more extreme forms of skepticism clearly outweighs the known and present utility of less rigorous forms of belief; that there is a difference between narrow and partial ends and full and far-reaching ends; between the success

of the few for the moment and the happiness of the many for an enduring time. This, of course, is a serious claim. But notice that it purports to be an empirical one that, strictly speaking, we do not know to be true, and about which we should therefore be skeptical.

I do not, however, wish to conclude on this cavalier note. Perhaps the best way to illustrate the poignancy of the "happiness versus truth" problem is too close with James Thurber's fable about "The Moth and the Star."¹⁰

A young and impressionable moth once set his heart on a certain star. He told his mother about this and she counselled him to set his heart on a bridge lamp instead. "Stars aren't the thing to hang around," she said; "lamps are the thing to hang around." "You get somewhere that way," said the moth's father. "You don't get anywhere chasing stars." But the moth would not heed the words of either parent. Every evening at dusk when the star came out he would start flying toward it and every morning at dawn he would crawl back home worn out with his vain endeavors. One day his father said to him, "You haven't burned a wing in months, boy, and it looks to me as if you were never going to. All your brothers have been badly burned flying around house lamps. Come on, now, get out of here and get yourself scorched! A big strapping moth like you without a mark on him!"

The moth left his father's house, but he would not fly around street lamps and he would not fly around house lamps. He went right on trying to reach the star, which was four and one-third light years, or twenty-five trillion miles, away. The moth thought it was just caught in the top branches of an elm. He never did reach the star, but he went right on trying, night after night, and when he was a very, very old moth he began to think that he really had reached the star and he went around saying so. This gave him a deep and lasting pleasure, and he lived to a great old age. His parents and his brothers and his sisters had all been burned to death when they were quite young.

Moral: Who flies afar from the sphere of our sorrow is here today and here tomorrow. ●

FREE INQUIRY

a quarterly devoted to the ideals of secularism and freedom

We invite you to subscribe: ☐ 1 year \$22.50
☐ 2 years \$39.00
☐ 3 years \$54.00

Subscription includes the *Secular Humanist Bulletin*

☐ Check or money order enclosed ☐ New ☐ Renew
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Acct. # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name _____
(print clearly)

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Outside U.S. add \$6.00 for surface mail, \$12.00 for airmail.
(U.S. funds on U.S. bank).

FREE INQUIRY, Box 5 - Buffalo, New York 14215-0005

Call TOLL-FREE 1-800-458-1366.

In New York State call 716-834-2921.

6/90

Notes

1. Bertrand Russell, *Skeptical Essays* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1928), 155.
2. W. K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief," *Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, Baruch A. Brody (ed.) (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 246. Reprinted from Clifford's *Lectures and Essays*, 1879.
3. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell 1872-1914*, vol. 1 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1956), 289-290.
4. Paul Kurtz, *Exuberance: A Philosophy of Happiness* (Buffalo and New York: Prometheus Books, 1977), 63.
5. *Ibid.*, 61, 66.
6. Nicholas Rescher, "Rationality and Happiness," in *Rationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 210-223.
7. I hold happiness at its best to be reflective in nature, that is, to be a combination of subjective and objective conditions. Like Russell and Kurtz, I reject the extreme mentalism that holds if you believe in something and it brings you a sense of subjective well being that is all that matters. For a fuller discussion of the nature of happiness, see my essay "Russell and the Attainability of Happiness," *International Studies in Philosophy* 16:3 (1984), 14-24.
8. Shelley E. Taylor and Jonathan D. Brown, "Illusion and Well-Being: A Social Psychological Perspective on Mental Health," *Psychological Bulletin* 103:2 (1988), 193-210.
9. I am indebted to Jeffrey Miers for his point.
10. James Thurber, *Fables for Our Time* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1943), 19. ●

Editorials

Moral Repression in America

Paul Kurtz

It is commonly believed that the Moral Majority has been discredited and that the threat they posed during the 1980s has largely dissipated. The exposure of the scandalous behavior of certain evangelical preachers, Pat Robertson's failed presidential bid, and the generally less strident quality of right-wing fervor have combined to produce some complacency about the dangers ultraconservatives pose to our fundamental liberties.

The humanist-libertarian approach affirms that the state ought not to legislate personal morality, particularly concerning matters of privacy, and that there should not be an authoritarian conception of Moral Virtue imposed on everyone. Yet that is what seems to be happening today. Recent events in the United States show that a reactionary moral agenda is being adopted and that freedoms we had taken for granted are now being undermined.

A symptom of the new moral repression arose recently in Cincinnati concerning the exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's works. Right-wing vigilantes sank to new depths when a grand jury indicted the Contemporary Art Center and its director on obscenity charges for exhibiting the photographs. Of the nearly two hundred photos in the collection, seven—two of nude children and five that are homoerotic in character—aroused the displeasure of the would-be censors. It did not matter to them that persons under eighteen were denied admittance to the museum, nor that those who did not wish to view the exhibit were not compelled to do so. Following the censors' logic, should not Michelangelo's David be banned? What about the voluptuous nudes of Rubens, or the "Rape of the Sabine Women"?

Equally disturbing is the recent Supreme Court ruling permitting the prosecution of individuals for the possession of nude photographs of minors. We surely do not condone child pornography, and we believe that those who use children in this manner ought to be prosecuted for child abuse. But the Supreme Court ruled that merely possessing such material in the privacy of one's home

is a criminal offense. The Court upheld an Ohio law under which a Columbus man, Clyde Osborne, was convicted and sentenced to six months for possessing four nude photographs of a fourteen-year-old boy. Yet Osborne did not take the photographs himself, nor was he attempting to sell or distribute them, nor did he publicly display them. He had purchased them through the mail; postal authorities raided his house and he was charged with a crime. By this convoluted logic, since murder is an illegal and punishable offense, should we convict anyone possessing photographs of an actual murder? Or should such a law be applied selectively only to sexually explicit photos?

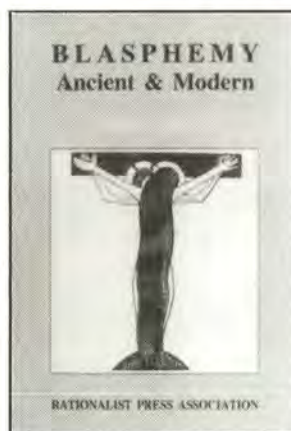
These cases are symptomatic of the continuing erosion of personal freedoms in the United States. We have written about the so-called War on Drugs, whereby hundreds of thousands of individuals have been jailed for possession of such drugs as marijuana, which is arguably less harmful than legal drugs like alcohol and tobacco. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is willing to go to any lengths to stamp out drug trafficking. It even flouted Mexican sovereignty by allowing bounty hunters to enter that country and bring back Humberto Alvarez Machain, who was implicated in the

Enrique Camareno Salizar case. Similarly, in the Noriega case, the Supreme Court recently ruled that equal protection of the laws and due process civil liberties do not apply to nationals living abroad. The current moral frenzy seems even more obsessive when in state after state citizens on the open roads are stopped at random and forced to submit to alcohol testing. Communities are rightly concerned about drunk driving, but such extreme police measures compromise everyone's civil liberties.

What seems to be emerging is a repressive morality surrounded by an atmosphere of hysteria and fear. Everywhere we see illustrations of this new outlook—such as the hue and cry about child abusers, flag burners, satanic conspirators, and the campaigns against abortion and birth control. Another especially telling illustration that the agenda of the Moral Majority is being adopted is the campaign for reimposition of the death penalty. Virtually every civilized nation has abandoned capital punishment as a barbaric method of retribution that has not been shown to be a deterrent. Yet a biblical mentality quoting "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is used to justify the death sentence and is gaining headway across the country.

Talk about "a kinder, gentler nation" is well and good. Yet President Bush, like Reagan, is still appointing extremely conservative federal judges. We are admonished by conservatives that liberal "legal activism" is wrong; yet a new kind of conservative "legal activism" is now being unleashed. Are we seeing the emergence of a new kind of moral fascism—one that extolls Abstinence, Moral Purity, and Virtue, and is willing in the process to undermine the fabric of individual liberties so hard won? •

BOOKS NOW AVAILABLE!



Blasphemy: Ancient & Modern

by Nicholas Walter

Published by the Rationalist Press Association, \$9.95 plus \$2.25 postage and handling.

Funerals Without God: A Practical Guide to Nonreligious Funerals

by Jane Wynne Willson

Published by the British Humanist Association, \$9.95 plus \$2.25 postage and handling.

Send check or money order to
CODESH, P.O. Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215

Entrapment, Possession, and Pornography

Vern Bullough

Difficult, emotional cases often lead to the making of bad laws. Americans have a tendency to simplify things, to try to solve complex problems with simple answers, and as readers of *FREE INQUIRY* know, complex problems do not have simple answers. One of the most complex problems with which we are wrestling today in the field of human sexuality is that of adult-juvenile sexual interaction.

I recently heard a lecture by a person who works with children involved in such interactions. She was loving and supportive, but simplistic in the extreme. She maintained that adult (usually male) pedophiles go out of their way to come into contact with adolescent boys (or girls), carefully planning their seductions. She painted the following scenario as typical: The man buys some classic cars and begins to repair them in his garage in a working-class neighborhood. Quickly a number of car-crazy adolescents come by and he lets them assist. As the boys come to know and trust him, he takes them on an occasional outing (with their parents consent), invites them into his house for lunch, and begins leaving *Playboy* magazines out for them to see. As their interest in *Playboy* intensifies, the man begins leaving more explicit photographs and magazines around, many of which depict sexual activities between men and adolescent boys. Having desensitized the boys, or at least some of them, the perpetrator suggests

to the most apt ones that they should imitate the photos. Some do, and as they grow older and become ready to leave his garage for the broader world of employment or college, he has them initiate younger boys who will continue in their footsteps.

I have no doubt that such things happen. But the speaker's conclusion was that the whole thing started because *Playboy* was available to adolescent boys, and that if such a magazine had not been around, adult-child sex would never have taken place. This person had thus become a strong advocate of the censorship of any sexually explicit material on the grounds that children might see it and be influenced by it.

Ignored are a whole host of issues about why some of the adolescents in her "typical" scenario engaged in sexual activity and others did not, or even the question of how we deal with pedophiles. Unfortunately, most of our action in dealing with adult-child sexual interaction is at the same level of confusion. For several years the United States government has banned the dissemination of any visual representation of adult-child sex on the grounds that such material was exploitative and that the only way to end such exploitation was to terminate the market for it. In a sense this is laudable, but what does it mean in practice? For one thing, it means that the United States Post Office has become, in effect, the unofficial purveyor of almost all adult-child pornog-

raphy advertised in this country in an effort to catch and convict those who seek such material. The Post Office has gone to elaborate lengths to do this, establishing bases in the West Indies and in Europe. Postal agents place the discrete advertisements in certain magazines and newspapers to entice those interested in adult-child sex to write to the Post Office drop-box.

Letters received in the boxes are carefully answered by postal inspectors well trained in the psychology of their correspondents. Usually in the initial letters there is no offer of photographic representations, since this might alert the potential customer to the danger of arrest. Rather, the correspondence is continued until the person feels at ease—then comes the hint that material may be available, providing the person establishes his or her good faith by exchanging a photo with the undercover inspector. This is done and the correspondence continues as the inspector slowly builds up the case. When he or she has enough evidence, local police are notified and cooperate in a raid on the house and office of the correspondent, seizing and confiscating any relevant material. In the past, mere possession of pornographic material was not constitutionally prohibited, but recently this changed by an action of the United States Supreme Court.

The decision involved a case in Ohio, which, along with eighteen other states, had passed a law criminalizing the possession of pornography featuring children under eighteen. Outlawed were the portrayal of children in "lewd exhibition" and graphic focus on the genitals. In the Ohio case no portrayal of sexual activity was found, only photographs of individual boys aged fourteen or older. The court decision ignored the whole entrapment procedure through which the case was uncovered.

Postal inspectors have gone to great lengths to expose their subjects. In a recent civil case, they furnished photographs and data to the defendant that implicated the person bringing the charge against him. The issue is a very troubling one about which we will undoubtedly hear more. What appears evident, though, is that those who engage in adult-child sexual activity, either directly or vicariously through pornography, are still around. They have just become more sophisticated, and those among them who are wealthy enough have simply taken long vacations in Third World countries where children are cheap. American children may be no more protected than they were before, but certainly the government in its anxiety to deal with a problem has turned to measures that may clearly be labeled as unconstitutional. •



Secular Humanist Calendar

Hedge your bets . . .

. . . order *FREE INQUIRY*'s **secular humanist calendar** for 1991. Includes major secular holidays, important past events, and the birthdays of prominent secular humanists. With illustrations by Tom Toles, and lots of room for your personal notes. **\$7.95** includes postage and handling. To order, call toll-free 1-800-834-1366 (In New York State call 716-834-2921).

Viewpoints

Murder in the Name of Religion

James A. Haught

When you think of saints, you envision stained-glass pictures of piety. But the truth can be horribly different.

Consider Pope Pius V:

When he was Grand Inquisitor, he sent Catholic troops to kill 2,000 Waldensian Protestants in Calabria in Southern Italy.

After becoming pope, he sent Catholic troops to kill Huguenot Protestants in France. He ordered the commander to execute every prisoner taken.

Pius also launched the final crusade against the Muslims, sending a Christian naval armada to slaughter thousands in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

And he intensified the Roman Inquisition, torturing and burning Catholics whose beliefs varied from official dogma.

After his death, he was canonized a saint. He still is venerated by the church.

It is as if Adolf Hitler were elevated to sainthood.

Or consider Saint Dominic, the king of torture. He founded the Dominican order, whose priests were judges of the Inquisition. They presided while screaming victims were twisted and ripped on fiendish pain machines until they confessed to thinking unorthodox thoughts. Then the Dominicans led the broken "heretics" in grand processions to the stake. (The priests also tortured thousands of women into confessing they were witches who had sex with Satan, changed themselves into animals, flew through the sky, caused storms, and the like. The "witches" also were burned for their confessions.)

Or consider Saint Cyril, whose monks and followers beat to death the great woman scientist, Hypatia, director of the Alexandria Library, for her scientific approach to nature.

Or Saint Pedro Arbries, a Spanish in-

James A. Haught is associate editor of the Charleston Gazette in West Virginia, and the author of Holy Horrors: An Illustrated History of Religious Murder and Madness (Prometheus).

quisitor who tortured and burned former Jews for harboring their old beliefs. An ex-Jew assassinated him, and he was canonized as a martyr.

If these are saints, heaven help us.

I was a newspaper church columnist for many years. Endlessly, I heard ministers proclaim that religion instills love and compassion in believers. It's a universal message. Meanwhile, back at the paper, our headlines said:

- Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs Massacre Each Other in India
- Protestant Gunmen Kill Catholics in Belfast, and Vice Versa
- Shi'ites in Iran Hang Baha'i Teens Who Won't Convert
- Jonestown Believers Gave Cyanide to Their Children
- Christian Snipers Pin Down Muslim

Some Fatherly Advice to Tammy Faye

Martin Gardner

I have never met Tammy Faye Bakker, nor do I know anyone who knows her, so my impressions of the real Tammy are based mainly on her autobiography, *I Gotta Be Me*, as told to Cliff Dudley (New Leaf Press, 1978), and on media accounts of her shenanigans.

Martin Gardner is the author of many articles and books, including Science: Good, Bad and Bogus; The Magic Numbers of Dr. Matrix; and The New Age: Notes of a Fringe-Watcher. His latest book is for children and is called The Snark Puzzle Book (Prometheus).

Machine-Gunners in Beirut

- Hands and Feet Chopped Off Under Islamic Law in Sudan

Politicians always call religion a mighty force for good. President Reagan labeled it "the bedrock of moral order." They say it builds brotherhood.

But Christians killed 3 million Jews during Europe's centuries of religious persecution, before Hitler secularized the process.

And the Reformation wars pitted Catholics and Protestants in a ghastly century of slaughter.

And the Third World today still suffers bloodbaths caused by religious tribalism.

There's a tinge of the Twilight Zone in the constant declarations that religion creates love, when opposite results are everywhere.

Did religion make Pope Pius V loving as he killed Waldensians, Huguenots, Muslims, and nonconforming Catholics?

Did it make the Ayatollah Khomeini compassionate as he ordered the hanging of Baha'is and demanded the assassination of a "blaspheming" British writer?

Did it make the Aztecs affectionate as they sacrificed and skinned maidens to appease a feathered serpent-god?

Did it make brotherhood in Lebanon, where religious tribes wreak endless warfare?

Religion always is hailed as the cure for the world's evils. But, too often, it's the problem, not the solution. •

Tammy comes through her memoirs as a naive, whimsical, miserably educated woman who genuinely believes all the Pentecostal doctrines to which she and Jim were converted in their youth. She weeps on almost every page. She speaks in tongues. She has vivid dreams in which Jesus and angels tell her what to do.

Over the decades, as we all know, Jim and Tammy persuaded themselves that God wanted them to become wealthy. He wanted them to adopt a life style of conspicuous waste. Oral Roberts likes to tell about the time he flipped open his Bible and saw the passage, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayst prosper. . . ." (3 John: 2).

This revelation hit him like a thunderbolt. God doesn't intend his faithful to be poor! For fifty years Oral has proclaimed this doctrine of "seed faith." The more money you give to God's work, especially to Oral's ministry, the more loot you'll get back. Like Oral, Jimmy Swaggart, and Pat Robertson, Jim and Tammy convinced themselves that they deserved every dollar they received. They still think so.

It is not easy to understand how televangelists rationalize their riches in light of the fact that Jesus thundered against conspicuous consumption and status symbols. He told a rich young man he couldn't be a disciple until he sold all his possessions and gave the money to the poor. He urged his listeners not to put their trust in things that can rust or become moth-eaten and stolen. He told them not to think about the clothes they wore. One of his parables has a rich man in hell begging for drops of water. It is easier, he said, for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter heaven. I recall a cartoon by Art Young, in the old *Masses* magazine, that showed a preacher instructing his wealthy flock. On a blackboard was a picture of a camel being put through a meat grinder, and the resulting particles being pushed through the eye of a large needle.

Now that the Bakker ministry has collapsed as a result of incredible folly and greed, what should poor Tammy do? Here is my fatherly advice.

First, stop believing that every time you think God speaks to you in the spirit it is really God talking. Has it never occurred to you it could be the voice of Satan? Or that you were talking to yourself?

Second, consider the possibility that what happened to you and Jim may be God telling both of you to stop preaching. There is no way, sister Tammy, you can revive a dead ministry. No one wants to listen to you any more, except a handful of simple-minded followers. The more you try to revive your ministry, the more pitiable you appear.

Third, give up thinking God wants you to look like a hooker. Have you heard the one-liner about the time someone washed your face and discovered you were Jimmy Hoffa? Actually under your paint you are still a comely woman. Go on a diet. Start exercising. Pay an expert to teach you how to apply make-up with skill and taste.

Fourth, divorce Jim. Regardless of whether he serves his full prison term, the bum isn't worth waiting for. His preaching days, like yours, are kaput. But don't worry about him. When he finally leaves the slammer, he'll make a fortune with a ghost-

written book about the evils of prison life. You should have no trouble marrying again, perhaps to a wealthy born-again businessman. A career in films may open up for you.

Fifth, latch on to a top music agent and start recording country and gospel songs. All you need is one hit record to make the country-music scene. Your voice could be worse, and (as you know) technicians can do wonders these days in the way they modify voices electronically. A Tammy Faye who gave up preaching would be invited on endless talk shows. Americans love to welcome sinners back into show biz. Publicity from the television movie about you and Jim has been priceless. In no time at all you could be making almost as much money as you made as a religious huckster.

Your first gospel recording should not be a new hymn, but one of the golden oldies. How about "The Old Rugged Cross"? It's hard to understand why a modern rendition of this greatest of all evangelical hymns has never made it to the top ten. As a video, with sound and visual effects similar to those for the crucifixion scenes Jim staged in Heritage Village, complete with earthquake noises and the blood of Jesus, you'll have a sure blockbuster on your hands.

And never forget, dear Tammy: God loves you!

A special invitation to you to become a

Charter Associate Member

of the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism

For only \$15 a year (\$25 for families), Charter Associate Members will receive the *Secular Humanist Community Report* and the *Robert Ingersoll Report*. In addition, you'll receive a **10 percent discount** on the registration fees for FREE INQUIRY conferences and seminars, on FREE INQUIRY audiotapes and videotapes, and on a select list of books that have grown out of the activities of FREE INQUIRY and CODESH. Each Charter Associate Member will also receive a personalized wallet-size membership card.

YES, I wish to become a Charter Associate Member of the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism

Enclosed are my dues for: ☐ A one-year single membership, \$15
☐ A one-year family membership, \$25

Also enclosed is my additional contribution of: ☐ \$_____ (Donor) ☐ \$100 or more (Supporter)
☐ \$25 or more (Endorser) ☐ \$500 or more (Sustainer)
☐ \$50 or more (Sponsor) ☐ \$1,000 or more (Benefactor)
☐ \$5,000 or more (Patron)

Total \$_____ ☐ Check enclosed ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa Acct. #_____ Exp. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Return to: Jean Millholland, FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, N.Y. 14215-0005 • (716) 834-2921

On the Barricades

Robertson promoting Christian politics

Televangelist and former presidential hopeful Pat Robertson is apparently spearheading a new Religious Right group that seeks to "mobilize and train Christians for effective political action."

The Christian coalition, headquartered in Chesapeake, Virginia, lists five goals in its promotional literature: representing Christians before local councils, state legislatures, and Congress; getting Christians out in the public arena and in the media; training Christian leaders for effective social and political action; informing Christians about timely issues and pending legislation; and protesting anti-Christian bias and defending the legal rights of Christians.

The group, which plans to operate primarily at the grassroots level, says its main political goals are to criminalize abortion, to pass a school prayer amendment, to protest "films and TV programs that defame our Lord and caricature His servants," and to increase the presence of religious symbols on government property. (*Church & State*)

Pat has a head start with Bush . . .

President Bush addressed a special plenary session of the National Religious Broadcasters convention held recently in Washington, D.C. "All men are endowed not by the government with certain inalienable rights but by God," he observed, mentioning that there is no denying that the United States is "a religious nation." In addition to voicing his support of voluntary school prayer and the "sanctity of human life," he declared that "while God can live without man, man cannot live without God." Thus, fetuses presumably figure into Bush's equation, though women apparently do not.

. . . Thatcher, Walesa, and Baker

The April issue of *Crisis*, "a journal of Catholic lay opinion," quoted Margaret Thatcher as saying,

There is little hope for democracy if the hearts of men and women cannot be touched by a call to something greater than

themselves. Political structures, state institutions, collective ideals are not enough. *We* Parliamentarians can legislate for the rule of law. *You* the church can teach the life of faith.

The same article noted that during his recent keynote address to the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, Secretary of State James Baker quoted Lech Walesa, saying, "Sooner or later we will have to go back to our fundamental values, back to God, the truth, the truth which is in God. We look to America . . . and expect from you a spiritual richness to meet the aspirations of the twentieth century." Baker himself said that "Having a position of power does not bring inner security and fulfillment. That comes only by developing a personal relationship with God, which for me is personified in Jesus Christ. Inner security and real fulfillment come by faith."

CODESH signs amicus brief

The Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH) has joined with the American Jewish Congress, the ACLU, the National Coalition for Public Education and Religious Liberty, and twenty other organizations to file an amicus brief challenging the practice of Bible reading by volunteer community members during the regular

school day in a public elementary school in Gravette, Arkansas.

The Federal District Court for the Western District of Arkansas issued an order halting the practice late last year. But the Superintendent of the Gravette Public School District and others are appealing the decision to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in hopes of reinstating the Bible reading, claiming that it had nothing to do with religion and was just a good way to teach moral values. Children who questioned the readings, however, were told that the Bible is the word of God.

SHARP donations help needy

Last year CODESH announced the formation of the Secular Humanist Aid and Relief Program (SHARP) to offer assistance to victims of the natural disasters and other "acts of God." Since that time we have received donations from many caring secular humanists. Thus far the money has gone primarily to Armenian children and other victims of the tragic earthquake in the Soviet Union and also to the victims of the San Francisco earthquake. A donation has also been made to the Ebony Museum of Art, which promotes work by African-American artists.

All money raised by SHARP will be expended through secular organizations. If you wish to help in this humanitarian effort, please make your check payable to CODESH, SHARP Fund, Box 5, Buffalo, New York 14215. We will see to it that it is sent to the proper agencies. All contributions are tax-deductible. •

Tom Toles, FREE INQUIRY cartoonist, wins Pulitzer

Editorial cartoonist Tom Toles, whose original work has appeared in *FREE INQUIRY* since 1984, was recently awarded a Pulitzer Prize, the highest honor in journalism.

A graduate of the State University of New York at Buffalo, his work is syndicated in more than 100 newspapers nationwide. Said *Buffalo News* editor Murray Light, "Toles is a singular talent, and his work is hard-hitting and provocative. . . . He's been accorded a high honor he truly deserves."

FI couldn't have said it better. The soft-spoken artist carries a mighty pen, and we congratulate him wholeheartedly.



Mysterious Cult Misuses Humanist Label

Bob von Holdt

Editor's Note: Except for the correction of obvious typographical errors, selections from the documents of the siloists are reprinted verbatim.

For several years secular humanists and members of the growing international Green Movement have become increasingly alarmed by the activities of a previously obscure sect that since 1984 has gone from a "stage of cadres" to a "stage of masses" by creating "humanist" and "Green" political and nonpolitical organizations as fronts for recruiting members. In a 1985 report, International Humanist and Ethical Union copresident Rob Tielman writes:

This "party" is an international sect which was set up in Argentina. . . . There is not a single philosophical relationship with the humanist tradition. . . . The organization has a hierarchical and authoritarian structure and recognizes no democratic decision-making. . . . Simple slogans, like "for peace" and "against unemployment," are used, which obviously speak to young people. If these young people show any interest, they are brainwashed by means of exhaustive indoctrination and social isolation; they have to sever all their connections with nonmembers of the sect. They try to turn these young people into so-called militants who, in their turn, have to recruit new youngsters.

On June 9, 1989, Die Grünen, the West German Green Party, echoed Tielman's sentiments and issued a press release warning of an "international sect running for European elections under the Green label."

This sect, which rather grandiosely calls itself "The Movement," follows the teachings of a somewhat mysterious Argentine named Mario Rodriguez Cobo. Cobo is best known to his followers by the nickname "Silo," and his ideology is referred to as siloism. The Movement defines itself as "the organization which interprets the needs of human beings and produces means to advance from the state of predetermination to that of freedom." It is estimated that it has between 10,000 and 20,000 hard-core "true believers"

in about forty-two countries, though siloists tend to greatly inflate their figures. In the United States their activities appear to be primarily focused around San Francisco and New York City.

Siloists see themselves as an "unstoppable growing human current humanizing the earth." They believe that "if we must participate in public affairs, it is not by vocation, but because it is necessary for life itself, of which we are the most conscious expression," and also that "to unleash whirlwinds of our point of view is primary and fundamental for the creating and generating of a new stage of mankind." Siloists seem to genuinely believe that through their "internal" and "external" work they possess the one true key to transform both the individual and society, creating a new age for humanity. Furthermore, they believe they are morally bound to share this wonderful discovery with the rest of us and convert us to "the correct siloist view of reality."

This moral obligation apparently applies to other movements and schools of thought as well: "The Movement may also be able to guide and transform existing organizations that have demonstrated the ability to contribute to human development."

The siloists were at first so optimistic that they believed all they needed to do was disperse like seeds around the globe and start a chain reaction. One document, circa 1978, states: "We are interested in divulging our ideas, in unloosing an expansive, contaminating, and contagious wave that will slowly spread to more and more sympathetic people, and not in concrete and decrepit power. It is a mental wave, a chain reaction that we are interested in producing."

This initial optimism later dimmed and a different strategy was adopted. A document from 1985, early in the "stage of masses," states: "So we learn that spreading a message is not enough. We need to build strong and enduring structures that will surpass the crisis. . . . Some years ago we organized a political party in one country . . . now we want to do that in every country

on the five continents." Silo, in guidelines issued around the same time, states: "Our tactic is to have access to power by setting up a parallel organization to the system and emptying it. When everything is chaotic, the people will choose us."

During the transitional period between the "stage of cadres" and the "stage of masses," The Movement went through a variety of name-changes and still uses many of these names for its various fronts. From the late 1970s through the early 1980s, it called itself "The Community for the Development and Equilibrium of the Human Being" or, more simply, "The Community." In 1984 it transformed itself into the Humanist Movement and launched the Humanist Party. In 1985, around the same time that it was launching a new nonpolitical front called Green Future as well as the siloist Green Party, "humanist" was dropped from the name of the parent organization, which became simply The Movement.

In many places where The Movement operates it is not uncommon to find quite a variety of different siloist fronts in operation. In San Francisco we have neighborhood Humanist Action Groups, the Humanist Party, neighborhood "Green" groups, Green Future, and The Community, all eagerly preaching the siloist gospel and seeking new converts.

Although the various siloist fronts ("organisms" in siloese) often portray themselves as champions of grassroots democracy, such a concept is not reflected in The Movement's own hierarchical structure. One enters The Movement at the lowest level as a "group delegate," that is, basically anyone who shows any interest at all in The Movement. A group delegate who then recruits ten other new members becomes a "team delegate," and the ten recruits become his or her "base council." The next steps up the pyramid are general delegate, coordinator, and, finally, general coordinator. There are no elections. One rises only through recruitment and building one's own "structure." Information and major decisions flow downward from the top of the pyramid to the bases.

Movement members repeatedly claim that their "organisms" are totally autonomous from The Movement. Their internal documents, however, paint a somewhat different picture. Summarized, the strategy that the siloists have followed since 1984 is to promote the *appearance* of autonomy while maintaining tight internal control.

Dissension, objections, and questioning of decisions are barely tolerated. Former Movement members both here and abroad

Bob von Holdt is a member of the U.S. Green Committee of Correspondents International Working Group.

have described how they were forced out for daring to ask too many questions. An internal document from 1984 shows this lack of tolerance quite clearly:

If there are people who try to hold things back they could ruin [an] important process of historical proportions. There are those who after a dedicated period of clarification can surpass their resistances and move forward with decision. But for those people who present "mental reservations," present objections, etc., maybe they are not in a position to participate in the frontline, but rather in less important situations. It might even be the case of inviting some of these people to retire so as to prevent our process from being delayed.

How does The Movement respond when legitimate secular humanists point out the philosophical chasm that separates the two groups? A recent publication of Humanist Action, a siloist front in San Francisco, states:

Although there are many varieties of Humanism today, including the so-called 'secular humanists' popularly known here in the United States, Humanist Action's Humanism traces its roots to the first Western Humanists in the Renaissance. For us, Humanism basically means that human beings come first. Not the State, not the Church, not the Corporations, not the great-god profit, but humans. This is common with other forms of Humanism. In addition we want to bring these ideas into actual practice, into our political reality.

Siloists also admit to having differences with the global Green Movement, which already had established its own identity and values prior to siloist attempts to claim the Green label as their own. Legitimate Greens adhere to four key values: nonviolence, ecological wisdom, grassroots democracy, and social justice. Unlike the siloists, legitimate Green groups do not send people to other countries on "missions" to launch new organizations, they do not send funding to other countries, and they do not interfere in the internal politics of other countries. In their own version of their history disseminated earlier this year, the siloists state: "... since serious differences [with the Greens] arose with regards to general conceptions, implementation and organization, the creation of the Green Party was decided as a renovated and coherent variant." But Greens would like to know why, if the siloists had such serious differences with the Green Movement, they insist on using the same or a quite similar name? And why, in the face of rejection and

denouncement, do they remain adamant in insisting on their right to the name, claiming that they are somehow the "true" Greens just as they insist that they are the true "humanists"? I believe that the answer lies in the arrogance that always seems to accompany those who feel they are on the side of righteousness, and also in a deep-seated paranoia that stems from the conditions under which siloism first developed.

The Movement seems to have been indelibly marked by its early struggle under repressive conditions in South America, which infused it with a great deal of suspicion and defensiveness, causing it to see itself as locked in a bitter battle with "The System." This attitude was spelled out quite clearly in 1978:

We must think of how to develop ourselves in difficult and repressive conditions. . . . This is the medium in which we have to develop and is the one we must compensate. In other words it is war. . . . This is why we practice *the mental martial arts*, the mental belligerence by using principles, laws and knowledge to be able to develop to the utmost our ideas and our work. . . . We have to know that we will be in an environment that will become foreign, hostile, and tense negatively and will increase the aggressiveness and disillusionment with a lot of mental noise.

A 1984 document that describes how the Humanist Party is to be set up says:

We should use a combat style. We are not on the defensive side, on the contrary, we are in a sort of constructive and active attack. We have not done any wrong, our conscience and memory is clear, not like others, many others who believe to have some strange authority. It is "them" who are in the bench of the accused.

This belligerence expresses itself in a variety of ways. It has been noted by a number of investigators that members of The Movement, when questioned or challenged, typically launch personal smear attacks aimed at discrediting those who dare to question them, and show little interest in addressing the substantive issues that are raised. A further manifestation can be seen in a posture siloists commonly adopt of having some sort of identity with the principles they claim to espouse. You are either with them or against them.

This paranoia even extends to the halls of academia. A document entitled "Study of The Movement" prepared for 1988's siloist "Humanist International" in Italy, states:

The Movement encourages the ideological

debate with the behavioral sciences, which while failing to resolve their own problems claim to regulate social life. Due to their conceptual vagueness, these sciences are suspect of being in league with the dominant system of violence and oppression.

The Movement extends this debate to the entire cultural field, and also of course to Art, Philosophy, and Religion, demanding from them a precise definition of their objectives and procedures concerning the liberation of human beings.

By declaring academia as suspect of being in league with the enemy (The System), they are able to rationalize not having to subject their ideology to academic scrutiny and debate, and are thus able to reject any criticism that comes from academic circles.

This attitude toward academia can be further illuminated by another passage from the document cited above:

From a logical point of view, we affirm the method of existential analysis and we oppose it to any previous system of logic that—through inference—aims to arrive from the general to the particular. . . .

In this respect, we reinstate the interpretation of categorical propositions made by Brentano in 1874, according to which particular propositions have a existential character, while universal propositions are only their negation.

We therefore disqualify Aristotelean logic and its derivation (including Hegel's dialectic and Lukasiewicz's contemporary logic) in this precise point, and we stress this subject with special relevance because of its enormous theoretical and practical consequences.

From this point of view they then promulgate a series of propositions, including:

Proposition 1. Human existence takes place in the world. It begins, develops and concludes in the world. Therefore, we cannot assume a direction, a reason or purpose prior to existence, without contradicting the aforementioned.

Proposition 1.1. Human existence begins at birth with the opening up of intentionality towards the world as the first step of liberation from natural conditionings. From this point of view, we cannot rigorously speak of "human existence" prior to birth.

Proposition 2. By "world," we understand all that is different from one's body. However, we consider our bodies as part of the world. Body and the world are given, factual, natural.

Proposition 2.1. Nature lacks intentions. Neither the body nor the world possess separate consciousness. To attribute an end to nature might be used as a device of understanding, but cannot be legitimately derived from this proposal.

What bothers and appalls many critics

of the siloist ideology is this approach, which begins with the "I," the human situated in a neutral, valueless world, and leads them to define value only in relation to human beings. This then leads to valuing nature only for its importance to us, and assigning it no intrinsic value of its own. Legitimate Greens, who take a biocentric rather than an anthropocentric view, see this type of attitude as a major cause of our current ecological dilemma rather than part of the solution.

Two other key elements of the siloist ideology are the concepts of "Synthetic Man" and "Generational Dialectics." Although these concepts are publicly stressed very little if at all, they are important in understanding the siloist world view.

The Synthetic Man concept states that as part of humanity's evolutionary step, all the races and cultures on earth will naturally intermix, creating a fusion of the best characteristics and forming a new race in which even "The differences of the sexes . . . will tend to reduce itself more and more, not only in the aspect of social relations or of mere clothing . . . even in the secondary psychic and sexual characteristics." Siloists believe that by achieving this uniform

sameness and eliminating diversity, evils such as racism, classism, and so forth will also be eliminated. Creation of this new race is thus a part of the siloist mission.

Generational Dialectics is basically a siloist rewrite of history as a continuous series of struggles of the young versus the old: "The struggle of the generations, the foundation of every historical process." This is a major reason why siloist organizing puts such a heavy emphasis on recruiting youth. The Movement's first organizing manual was entitled *Youth Power*.

I have been studying The Movement and siloism for seven years, since a chance encounter with members of The Community at a fair in San Francisco in August 1982. I had for some time been curious about sects and cults and the mechanisms by which they attract and hold people. Living in the Bay Area, I was familiar with and had on occasion seen Hare Krishna devotees, Moonies, and fundamentalist zealots in action. Lurid press accounts of Jim Jones and Jonestown were still fresh in my mind, though I had had no real first-hand experience with these groups.

Initially, I planned only to attend a few meetings, but, like Alice when she ventured

down the rabbit hole, I grew curiously and curiously. I posed as a "true believer" and spent the next three and one half years inside The Movement to see what I could learn. Every new piece of information, each new internal document would whet my appetite for more. Still, the psychological pressure and the pressure to recruit others (which I never did) was intense. Finally, the stress became more than I could handle, and I walked away from The Movement in January 1986.

For the past several years I have continued to study the activities of The Movement while at the same time becoming an activist in the growing United States Green Movement. I have been exchanging research both with other Greens and with secular humanists, the result being the formation of a very loosely knit global "Silowatch" network sharing information and trying to inform the public about the true nature of The Movement.

Readers of FREE INQUIRY who know of activity of The Movement in their area or who would like to receive more information may write to me c/o San Francisco Greens, 777 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110. ●

The Influence of Robert Ingersoll

Gordon Stein

Rarely will a high-school student of today encounter the name of Robert G. Ingersoll. Those college undergraduates who take courses on speech may occasionally see his name. Unless they take an advanced course on nineteenth-century America, most college history students will not. Yet during the latter part of his lifetime, Robert G. Ingersoll was perhaps the best-known and most-listened-to American. From about 1880 to his death in 1899, Ingersoll probably spoke to more Americans in person than anyone before or since. He had audiences of as many as 3,000 people a night during several months a year for many years while he was on tour. Why is Ingersoll not better remembered today? Did his ideas have any lasting influence, even if his name did not?

Gordon Stein is the author of the bibliography of Ingersoll's works, Robert G. Ingersoll, and editor of the Encyclopedia of Unbelief.

Ingersoll wrote and spoke about a great many topics, but we would be hard-pressed to find many original ideas in his writings or speeches. He was a popularizer, who brought to the people many ideas that had not been widely known before he said them. He had a unique and often poetic way of putting things, which caused many people to remember what he said.

Ingersoll's influence upon women's issues

Let's start with an easy contribution: birth control. Every historian credits Margaret Sanger with the promotion and successful establishment of the idea of birth control in the United States. But Sanger counted Ingersoll as an influence.¹ He recognized that a woman's role in society would always be a captive one unless she could control her childbearing capacity:

Why have the reformers failed? . . . I will tell them why. . . . Ignorance, poverty,

and vice are populating the world. The gutter is a nursery. People unable even to support themselves fill the tenements, the huts and hovels with children. . . . The babe is not welcome, because it is a burden. . . . The real question is, can we prevent the ignorant, the poor, the vicious from filling the world with children? . . . To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible savior of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.²

This ties directly into Ingersoll's views on women, about whom he spoke and wrote extensively. He had very close relationships with the women in his personal life. He was devoted to his wife and two daughters, and was also close friends with Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, Lucretia Mott, and Matilda Joselyn Gage. Although it is difficult to say how much Ingersoll influenced the suffragettes, and how much he was influenced by them, he certainly helped to publicize their message. His most direct sentiment regarding women's rights is probably the following:

In my judgment, the woman is the equal of the man. She has all the rights I have and one more, and that is the right to be protected. If there is any man I detest, it

is the man who thinks he is the head of a family—the man who thinks he is “boss.”

Thus, Ingersoll considered women to be men's intellectual equals:

Nothing gives me more pleasure, nothing gives greater promise for the future than the fact that woman is achieving intellectual and physical liberty. It is refreshing to know that here, in our country, there are thousands [!] of women who think and express their own thoughts—who are thoroughly free and thoroughly conscientious. Woman is not the intellectual inferior of man.

Of course he was for women's right to vote:

I am willing that every woman in the nation who desires the privilege and honor shall vote. If any woman wants to vote, I am too much of a gentleman to say she shall not. She gets her right, if she has it, from precisely the same source that I get mine. There are many questions upon which I deem it desirable that women should vote, especially upon the question of peace and war.

Ingersoll was in favor of divorce, initiated by either party with just cause:

When the civilized man finds his wife loves another, he does not kill, he does not murder. He says to his wife, “You are free.” When the civilized woman finds that her husband loves another, she does not kill, she does not murder. She says to her husband, “I am free.”

Ingersoll's influence on religion

During the last half of the nineteenth century, the concept of eternal hellfire, the necessary immorality of unbelievers, and the literal truth of the Bible were commonplace in mainstream Protestant thought. Very rarely was an unbeliever allowed to speak publicly. Yet Ingersoll lectured nightly to thousands of people against organized religion, and received front-page newspaper coverage. It was an unprecedented phenomenon.

All of this publicity, and the size and enthusiasm of Ingersoll's audiences, struck fear in the hearts of many clergymen. Their first instinct was to strike back, and the easiest way appeared to be by ad hominem attacks—at least then they wouldn't have to deal with his ideas. But Ingersoll led such a “squeaky clean” life that no mud would stick. No past scandal could be unearthed (although people like Clark Braden were not adverse to making up such scandals for the “glory of God”).³ The few who tried to attack

his ideas seem to have failed miserably.

Ingersoll believed that nothing was “sacred” or immune to discussion. He felt that mild satire often could make people consider the error of their views when straight discussion could not. His attack upon the literal truth of the Bible was relentless. He blamed the Bible for the prevailing attitudes toward slavery, women's inferior position, and much of the hypocrisy and injustice in the world. His repeated criticisms of the Good Book reinforced people's existing doubts about its value as a moral guide. There is no question that some of the liberalization of Protestant theology in America came about as a direct result of Ingersoll's attacks upon it, especially when he was later joined by a small army of other freethinkers, including Samuel P. Putnam, B. F. Underwood, and John E. Remsburg.

The concept of eternal punishment, especially when meted out for what Ingersoll viewed as relatively minor offenses, was particularly disturbing to him. He spared no words on the immorality of any Being who would want his creatures to suffer eternally. Again, no doubt partially due to Ingersoll, the concept of eternal hellfire left mainline Protestantism and is now confined to the theology of fundamentalist groups. Similarly, the literal acceptance of the Bible, against which Ingersoll fought so hard, is currently to be found almost exclusively among fundamentalist groups.

The idea that belief in the Bible or religion was somehow necessary to morality or worthiness as a human being was disturbing to Ingersoll. His lecture “The Great Infidels” was designed, at least in part, to show that nonbelievers could be moral and could make notable contributions to civilization.

Ingersoll was also quick to point out what he thought was wrong with the “design” of the world, if indeed there was a design. He often said that if *he* were designing the world, he “would make good health catching instead of disease.”

Perhaps Ingersoll's whole approach to life could be termed “rationalism with caring.” Although he generally allowed himself to be called an agnostic (“The Great Agnostic” was the way the press commonly referred to him), Ingersoll understood the meaning of agnosticism in a more precise way than do most people today. To him an agnostic was one who could say that he or she didn't know about God's existence, but that *you* also didn't know, since it is not possible to know whether God exists. Ingersoll also called himself an atheist, but not usually in public. In a moment of complete candor during a newspaper interview, he did admit publicly that “the agnostic is an atheist. The atheist

is an agnostic. The agnostic says ‘I do not know, but I do not believe there is any God.’ The atheist says the same. The orthodox Christian says he knows there is a God; but we know that he does not know. He simply believes. He cannot know. The atheist cannot know that God does not exist.”

Here Ingersoll shows that he correctly understands the classical meaning of the terms “agnostic” and “atheist”; that he recognizes that one can be *both* an atheist and an agnostic; that he was an atheist himself; that the agnostic knows that he or she cannot know whether there is a God; and that the Christian, even though he or she claims to know that there is a God, really does not and cannot *know* about this. The Christian (and theist generally) can only *believe* that there is a God. Ingersoll shows that he is aware of the traditional way in which atheists have defined atheism.⁴ He also uses the word “agnostic” in the pure sense. Finally, he shows that he correctly understands the epistemological problems inherent in the word “know.” In all of this, Ingersoll was far ahead of his contemporaries, and still ahead of some of today's atheists.

Finally, Ingersoll made a contribution to the field of organized freethought. He was largely responsible for the growth of the organized free thought movement in the United States during its “Golden Age,” from 1880 to 1899. Ingersoll's influence and participation enabled the movement to grow rapidly to a size it has not achieved since. He spread the message of the “good infidel,” contributed money and articles to the freethought press, spoke to freethought congresses, and served as an officer of various freethought organizations.⁵

Ingersoll's influence on the role of science

Ingersoll was a strong supporter of science. He went so far as to call it “the only possible savior of mankind.” He did not worship science; the concept of worship was as foreign to him as it is to most atheists. He recognized that science was nonsectarian:

Nature, so far as we can discern, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and retransforms forever. She neither weeps nor rejoices. She produces a man without purpose and obliterates him without regret. Only through man does Nature take cognizance of the good, the true, and the beautiful. So far as we know man is the highest intelligence.

Ingersoll promoted evolution as an explanation of the origin of the present forms

of life on earth:

When I first heard of that doctrine [evolution], I did not like it. My heart was filled with sympathy for those people who have nothing to be proud of except ancestors. I thought how terrible this will be upon the nobility of the old world. Think of their being forced to trace their ancestry back to the duke Orang Outang, or to the princess Chimpanzee. After thinking it over, I came to the conclusion that I liked that doctrine.

Ingersoll also recognized at an early stage that science and religion were in inevitable and serious conflict:

There is an irrespressible conflict between Christianity and science, and both cannot long inhabit the same brain. You cannot harmonize evolution and the atonement. The survival of the fittest does away with original sin.

Ingersoll's influence on politics and government

Ingersoll was for many years the confidant of presidents. Among his close friends were James Garfield and Rutherford B. Hayes. Ingersoll had first come to national attention when he gave the nominating speech for James G. Blaine at the Republican Convention of 1876. Although the press often interviewed him about his views on politics, Ingersoll rarely sought political office himself. There was some talk that Hayes was going to nominate him to be ambassador to Germany, but this never happened. On the issue of civil rights we know exactly where Ingersoll stood. He was for equality long before it was considered respectable:

I am willing to be on an equality in all hotels, in all cars, in all theatres, with colored people. I make no distinction of race. . . . I am willing to associate with all good, clean persons, irrespective of complexion. . . . Any government that makes a distinction on account of color is a disgrace to the age in which we live.

Indeed, in many areas Ingersoll held views that now seem to be commonplace, but then put him in a distinct minority.

While ecology and the environment were not concerns of the past century, Ingersoll was aware that we should be responsible for our planet:

Being satisfied that the supernatural does not exist, man should turn his entire attention to the affairs of this world, to the facts in nature. And, first of all, he should avoid waste—waste of energy, waste of wealth.

Ingersoll was a civil libertarian, though the term was not used back then. For example, he died long before Prohibition was instituted, but made a comment about it that turned out to be correct:

I am opposed to prohibition and always have been, and hope always to be. I do not want the legislature to interfere in these matters. I do not believe that people can be made temperate by law.

Furthermore, he was opposed to any limitation on free speech, particularly when it came to criticizing religion. He was opposed to any laws against "blasphemy," for example—though there is one area in which Ingersoll shows his Victorian upbringing. He was not in favor of allowing "obscene literature" to be sent through the mail. He was, however, strongly against including free thought in the classification of obscene, as Anthony Comstock wished to do.

In the nineteenth century, social welfare was handled mainly by private charitable organizations and philanthropic individuals. Robert Ingersoll was always quick to point out that unbelievers were often generous in their charitable contributions. The idea of religion being necessary to charity was foolish. There should be no religious test for public office.

Ingersoll's "creed" was a sort of summarization of his view of life. It reads as follows:

Happiness is the only good. The place to be happy is here. The time to be happy is now. The way to be happy is to make others so.

No humanist of today could have said it

better or more concisely.

Ingersoll's influence, as I have tried to show, was broad yet subtle. He spread the modern humanist outlook to vast groups of people before it was easy to do so, and before many were ready for that type of world-view. Still, his vast popularity enabled him to help do what so few of us have ever been able to do, that is, make the world a better place. Sticking to this "mission," born of honesty and concern, cost Ingersoll dearly. It troubled him somewhat that he never really entered politics, as he viewed it to be a way of allowing one to accomplish one's aims more effectively. How fortunate we are to have lost a politician but gained a true hero!

Footnotes

1. See for instance James Reed, *From Private Vice to Public Virtue: The Birth Control Movement and American Society Since 1830* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 129; and also Margaret Sanger: *An Autobiography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1938), 20–21.

2. All quotes are from R. G. Ingersoll, *Works* (New York: Dresden Publishers, 1900), vols. 1–12.

3. See Clark Braden, *Ingersoll Unmasked: A Scathing and Fearless Exposé of His Real Life* (Lexington, Ky.: Blue Grass Publishing Co., 1900).

4. See "Atheism" and "Agnosticism" in *The Encyclopedia of Unbelief*, Gordon Stein, ed., (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1985).

5. See his talks before the Congress of the American Secular Union in *Works*, vols. 4 and 12. Also see his talk to the Convention of the National Liberal League, vol. 12. Ingersoll served as the President of the American Secular Union and of the National Liberal League for several years.

Items Needed for Ingersoll Museum

When CODESH formed the Robert G. Ingersoll Memorial Committee in 1987, its objective was to establish a permanent memorial to Ingersoll in the form of a museum in his childhood home.

The house was purchased and money is being raised toward repairs. A matching grant for this purpose has been received from New York State.

But we need your help to make the museum a reality. The committee recently set up the Memorabilia, Museum, and Library Subcommittee, with Dr. Gordon Stein as chairman. The new subcommittee is currently seeking furnishings and other items for the museum.

At the top of the list are things associated with Ingersoll or the house. Furniture owned by the Ingersoll family and other period pieces are welcome. Books by Ingersoll—from his library, or autographed by him—as well as any correspondence to or from Ingersoll are especially needed. The subcommittee would also like photographs of Ingersoll and his family.

The subcommittee is hoping that most items will be donated, although a limited number of purchases may also be arranged. All donations are tax-deductible.

Please contact Tim Madigan, Ingersoll Memorial Committee, P.O. Box 5, Buffalo, New York 14215-0005.

Books

Evolution Reinterpreted

H. James Birx

Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History, by Stephen Jay Gould (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989). 347 pages, illustrated. \$19.95 cloth.

In *Wonderful Life*, Stephen Jay Gould offers a fascinating story about science and evolution. As a professor of paleontology at Harvard University, he is richly equipped to represent the scientific community as well as tackle head-on those myopic critics who seek to discredit biological evolution and its far-reaching implications.

Evolution is a fact; yet interpretations of this dynamic reality vary greatly among scientists, philosophers, and theologians. Explanations to account for the origin and history of life range from mechanistic materialism to creative vitalism and finalistic spiritualism.

The topic of this volume is the Burgess

H. James Birx is professor of anthropology at Canisius College, and the author of *Human Evolution* (1988). His *Interpreting Evolution: Darwin and Teilhard de Chardin* will be published by Prometheus Books this fall.

Shale of British Columbia, certainly one of the most significant areas for paleontological study. What makes this particular locality unique is not only the strange fossils found there but also the implications this detailed evidence holds for comprehending organic evolution in general. The persons and events surrounding the shale's exciting drama have shed much light on those complexities of scientific research and conceptual interpretation, which are of course influenced by vested interests and entrenched values.

Now eight thousand feet above sea level, this small limestone quarry in the Canadian Rockies' Yoho National Park was formed 530 million years ago. Its bed of fossilized mudslides holds an enormous variety of marine life that appeared after the so-called Cambrian explosion of multicellular species.

In 1909, Charles Doolittle Walcott, the world-famous but ideologically conservative geopaleontologist and expert on fossil trilobites, discovered the Burgess Shale with its exquisitely preserved soft-bodied invertebrate animals. Unfortunately, his investigation of these early life forms was inadequate, resulting in false conclusions. A victim of strong preconceptions and administrative burdens, Walcott classified these

peculiar ancient creatures by forcing them into those standard taxonomic categories of extant arthropods and worms. Consequently, he did not recognize that unconventional model of life history suggested by these incredible fossil forms.

Forty years later, however, paleontologists began to painstakingly reexamine the Burgess Shale evidence. The team effort of Harry B. Whittington, Derel Briggs, and Simon Conway Morris especially contributed to a reinterpretation of the fossils and their message. A conceptual revolution resulted from the free inquiry of these dedicated scientists who used only a camera lucida, binocular microscope, and a very fine vibro-drill. Surely creative imagination also played a crucial role, particularly concerning anatomical description and taxonomic placement.

The spectacular soft-bodied fauna of the Burgess Shale contains an abundance of both odd and ordinary anatomies (about twenty-five basic morphological plans), including such enigmatic coelomates as the fearsome two-foot-long predator *Anomalocaris* with its circular jaw; the bizarre two-inch *Opabinia* with five eyes, a frontal nozzle, and gills above lateral flaps; and the weird inch-long *Hallucigenia* with a bulbous head, seven tentacles, and long cylindrical trunk supported on the floor of an ancient sea by seven pairs of struts. Perhaps more surprises will be discovered at this site in the future.

Besides addressing himself to the strictly empirical evidence from the Burgess Shale rocks, Gould does not hesitate to explore those deeper conceptual aspects that this fossil site implies for understanding and appreciating organic evolution. He focuses on progress, contingency, and predictability. His examination of earth history in terms of life argues for a new model of organic evolution. In fact, this revision of evolutionary thought presents a remarkable worldview radically different from the traditional interpretation of biohistory in paleontology and biology.

Early naturalists pictured organic evolution as a ladder, a branching tree, a growing coral, a cone, or a pyramid, or even a series of circles. These views were usually earth-bound and human-centered, giving a privileged place to man in nature, that is, the Mosaic cosmogony.

Gould claims that the Burgess Shale's unusual fossil forms disprove the conventional paradigm of organic evolution as a cone of increasing diversity representing anatomical types. In sharp contrast, he argues that biohistory should be represented by a revised picture: an inverted cone that stresses

Gould Receives Forkosch Award

FREE INQUIRY is pleased to announce that Stephen Jay Gould has been selected to receive the Morris D. Forkosch Book Award for his *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*.

The \$1,000 prize is awarded to the best single volume published during the previous year that deals with the concerns of humanism. Gould is director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, and a Humanist Laureate. His other books include *The Panda's Thumb*, *Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes*, *The Flamingo's Smile*, and *An Urchin in the Storm*. The award will be presented to Gould at FREE INQUIRY's Ninth Annual Conference, to be held November 1 to 4, 1990, in Boston.

The Selma V. Forkosch Award, for the best article on humanism published in FREE INQUIRY in 1989, goes to Adolf Grunbaum, for "The Pseudo-Problem of Creation in Physical Cosmology," published in the Fall issue.

The awards were established in 1988 by Morris D. Forkosch to help further the cause of humanism by honoring individuals who make the greatest contributions to its advancement. The late Mr. Forkosch was an attorney, educator, and author who wrote hundreds of articles on legal matters and several books, including *A Treatise on Labor Law*, *Constitutional Law*, and *Outer Space and Legal Liability*. The Selma V. Forkosch Award was established in memory of his late wife. ●

NEW FROM PROMETHEUS

THY WILL BE DONE

A Guide to Wills, Taxation, and Estate Planning for Older Persons

Eugene J. Daly, Attorney at Law

Written specifically for older persons who want to put their estates in order, this book answers the questions most often asked about wills, inheritances, trusts, protecting assets from taxation, how to choose an executor, amending a will, and much more. Includes money-saving suggestions, examples, a glossary of terms, and a sample will.

250 pages • Cloth \$21.95 • Paper \$14.95

HOLY HORRORS

An Illustrated History of Religious Murder and Madness

James A. Haugth

The grim spectrum of religious persecution is chronicled from ancient times to the present. Illustrated with antique woodcuts and contemporary photographs that are at once gruesome and riveting.

"Centuries of religious madness in one finely crafted, all too true horror story." —*Playboy*

233 pages (Illustrated) • Cloth \$17.95

CONTRACEPTION

A Guide to Birth Control Methods

**Vern L. Bullough
and Bonnie Bullough**

An authoritative analysis of contraception, including a historical overview, basic reproductive anatomy, current methods, issues of legality and safety, and methods now being developed.

"A thought-provoking and informative book by respected researchers." —*Library Journal*

175 pages (Illustrated) • Paper \$13.95

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL

A Life

Frank Smith

The definitive biography of Robert G. Ingersoll, the famed 19th-century orator and freethinker. Included are rare photographs and extensive quotations from Ingersoll's correspondence.

425 pages • ISBN Cloth \$29.95

At better bookstores, or order directly from

PROMETHEUS BOOKS

Toll free (800) 421-0351
In NY State call (716) 691-0133
or write to

59 John Glenn Dr. • Amherst, NY 14120

Add \$2.50 postage and handling for the first book, \$1.25 for each additional book; N.Y. State residents add sales tax. #30130

the early decimation of prolific designs of life followed by the later diversification of fewer and fewer different groups.

Overcoming the "tyranny of the cone," as he puts it, Gould offers a new pattern of evolution that stresses the global decimation by lottery of species throughout evolution: after the early Cambrian explosion of life involving experimental diversification in anatomical designs, most of these forms became extinct. As a direct result, the continuation of organic history is based on merely a few surviving lineages. Briefly, as represented by the Burgess Shale fossil evidence, great anatomical disparity was followed by an organic diversity of only a small number of distinct body plans: from rich potentiality through unpredictability to limited actuality.

Nevertheless, conspicuously absent in this story of life is any application of the Gould-Eldredge hypothesis of punctuated equilibria to shed light on this new model of organic evolution (although I for one cannot see how the Cambrian explosion of life, with its awesome number of biological types, could be accounted for only in terms of population isolation and rapid speciation).

Evolution and extinction go hand and hand. The ongoing elimination of specific species leaves their now-vacant habitats available for future occupancy by those emerging forms of new life. Actually, extinction is the rule rather than the exception in organic evolution; most species have vanished like the trilobites. In fact, there have been several mass extinctions on a global scale throughout the sweep of geological time. For example, the demise of all dinosaurs paved the way for an adaptive radiation of the mammals. No doubt, both celestial influences and continental drift have altered earth history, contributing to evolution and to extinction on this planet.

Some evolutionists have been quick to see life on earth as a progressive march forward and upward, from simplicity to ever-increasing complexity. They argue that there is design in nature, and therefore a final end to this assumed directive movement of organic history is held to be consciousness or personality. Such interpretations of evolution center on the human animal, and inevitably are grounded in a religious belief that upholds the cosmic uniqueness of our species. In short, alleged teleology in nature as well as orthogenesis in paleontology and embryology are used to support those dogmatic tenets of theistic evolution.

However, Gould makes it very clear that one of his major objectives in science is to debunk such a progressive picture of organic evolution. For him, evolution is both

unpredictable and irreversible.

Charles Darwin knew very well that the primary objection to his own scientific theory of organic evolution would be its devastating implications for our species. For this reason and others, he deliberately left out any serious discussion of the human animal in his major work, *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin merely writes, "Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history." This is certainly the scientific understatement of the last century. Predictably, a bitter controversy over Darwinism did ensue because of its obvious threat to all human-centered world-views in general and to Christianity in particular.

In his review of Gould's *Wonderful Life*, appearing in the November 20 issue of *Newsweek*, Jerry Adler misrepresents the secular humanist position. For the record, secular humanism does not maintain that organic evolution on this planet has been a progressive process unfolding in a straight line from primeval bacteria to the recent appearance of *Homo sapiens*. In truth, it is just this view that is claimed by theistic evolutionism. The spiritualists (not the materialists) believe that humankind is the necessary end-product of four billion years of teleological evolution.

From a cosmic perspective, naturalistic humanists maintain that the human animal is a product of, and totally within, organic history (just like all the other plant and animal species). Humanists support science and reason rather than blind faith and metaphysical flights of wishful thinking. For them, the uniqueness of humankind as the symbolizing animal is its complex central nervous system. A superior brain allows for self-consciousness, articulate speech, rational thought, and moral conduct. Furthermore, within this framework, all aspects of our species are open to the wise purview of scientific research.

All present life, including the human being, is a result of millions upon millions of years of contingent events. As Gould emphasizes, change any one of these events and the outcome of history would be different! Jolted from our presumed cosmic comfort, we are indeed lucky to be here.

Even today, the theory of evolution remains controversial. This is in part due to the disturbing fact that most individuals are not well-informed in those special sciences that provide the empirical evidence to support the evolutionary framework—geology, paleontology, comparative morphology, taxonomy, and population genetics. Furthermore, the empirical truth of organic evolution still challenges those entrenched beliefs of traditional theology

concerning a god, free will, immortality, and a divine destiny.

In particular, there is the ongoing conflict between close-minded fundamentalist creationists and open-minded scientific evolutionists. Clearly, all those who hold a strict and literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis will be hard-put to fit the Burgess Shale evidence into their narrow, dogmatic religionist beliefs about both the origin and history of life on this planet.

The facts of material nature itself embody neither ethical principles nor theological assumptions. If there is no personal god, then

humankind is not the inevitable outcome of a divine design in this dynamic universe. Rather, its emergence is an improbable event in a seemingly endless cosmos.

In principle, no evolutionary world view is ever complete. There are always more facts and new ideas, as Gould's *Wonderful Life* clearly demonstrates. This book is an impressive and important contribution to science.

Future scientific evidence and critical thought will probably modify neo-Darwinism, the present evolutionary synthesis founded on genetic variation and natural

selection. Mechanisms now unknown to modern science may influence organic evolution, and additional sites may be found that will provide fossils to help answer the questions still raised by paleontologists.

Finally, in this vast universe, Earth may not be the only planet that harbors organic beings. Exobiology may hold a cascade of consequences for science and philosophy. One can envision the cosmic science of comparative exoevolution. Within this plausible context, we may indeed live in a world of wonderful life! •

The First Secular Jew

Paul Kurtz

Spinoza and Other Heretics. Volume I: The Marrano of Reason; Volume II: The Adventures of Immanence, by Yarmiyahu Yovel (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989) 456 pages total. \$45 the set.

This book has aroused extraordinary interest in Israel. For the Israeli philosopher Yarmiyahu Yovel considers Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) to have been “the first secular Jew”—a Jewish philosopher who rejected the authority of the Old Testament and of the rabbinate yet still identified with Jewishness, and who went on to develop an idealistic, rationalistic alternative conception of the universe and of the place of humanity within it.

Volume I: The Marrano of Reason traces the impact of Spinoza's Portuguese/Shepardic background on his outlook. Nineteen-ninety-two will mark the five hundredth anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and their subsequent persecution in Portugal as well. Spinoza's personal background and philosophical career were both deeply influenced by these events. Both the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs undertook an Inquisition compelling the Jews and the Moors to either convert to Christianity or leave the Iberian Peninsula. Many Jews, known as Marranos, publicly converted but practiced their ancient Hebrew faith in secret. Those who refused to convert fled and scattered far and wide. Spinoza's family emigrated to Amsterdam, where a prosperous Jewish community had taken hold. Most of these Jews were Marranos or the children of Marranos, who appreciated the state of relative freedom and tolerance afforded them in the Netherlands. Spinoza's family had not converted, and Spinoza was raised in the Orthodox faith.

He rejected the Torah and its message, however, and for that was excommunicated from the Amsterdam synagogue, which was fearful that religious heresy might provoke a wave of anti-Semitism. Many of its members, furthermore, wished to emigrate to Puritan England and did not want to arouse fear that they would bring apostasy and free thought. Thus Spinoza was forced to live outside of his ethnic community; yet he was always considered a Jew by the Gentiles.

Yovel traces the various influences that led Spinoza to his heretical views—especially the paradox of the Marranos, who were driven by a deep religious attachment to a “secret truth” that they tenaciously guarded from the Catholic world in which they lived. They were willing to suffer persecution because they believed in the law of Moses and his promise of salvation. It gave them a “sense of power” and “self-esteem” despite the humiliation they were forced to suffer. Spinoza rejected their biblical doctrines. In his most controversial book, *Theological Political Treatise*, he examined the contradictions and claims of the Old Testament and criticized them on rationalistic grounds. He laid the foundations for biblical criticism, which was later to develop and revolutionize the scholarly and scientific examination of the Bible. He likewise rejected the Christian faith of the New Testament. According to Spinoza, the God of the Bible did not intervene in history, did not invoke miracles, and did not guarantee personal immortality or salvation for those who believed in Him.

Spinoza lived an isolated life in the Calvinist Netherlands as a consequence of his dissenting views. He strongly defended liberty of thought and conscience and a tolerant and democratic society. He was also

deeply in tune with the intellectual ferment of the new science then sweeping Europe, and knew many of the greater thinkers of his day. He went on to develop a remarkable philosophical alternative to transcendental religion, which Yovel outlines in *Volume II: The Adventures of Immanence*.

Spinoza's mature views were published posthumously in his greatest work, *Ethics*. Here Spinoza uses the term “God” as equivalent to the structure or order of nature and the scientific laws under which it operates. For this he professes an “intellectual love.” Yovel describes Spinoza's views of reality as “immanence” rather than transcendence, for he naturalized the cosmic scene. Some have said that Spinoza was thus a pantheist; yet his vision of nature is consonant with atheism and nontheism, for good and bad are not defined by God, but relative to human desire; one can lead a virtuous life, but this depends on the rational control and moderation of one's desires. Spinoza thus expunges nature of any teleological views with anthropomorphic or anthropocentric characteristics. Men and women are part of nature, operating in terms of the same laws that are everywhere present.

Yovel considers Spinoza to have been the first secular Jew, for it was he who took the giant step that led to the eventual secularization of Jewish life, and he discusses the role of secular Jews in present-day Israel and the world. By abandoning the observant Judaism of his day but refusing to become a Christian, Spinoza sought to lay out an alternative philosophical eudaimonism, the life of reason and virtue without the pretensions of the biblical God of revelation and transcendence. Spinoza's message of secularity was meant for the world as an alternative to theism. He stands as a bridge from the religiosity of the Middle Ages to a new scientific and rationalist world-view that is equivalent to modernism. Spinoza's views are surely still relevant to the present-day world. •

Books in Brief

Philosophical Essays in Pragmatic Naturalism, by Paul Kurtz (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990). 265 pages. \$19.95, cloth. This thought-provoking yet highly readable book spans four decades of the author's philosophical thought. The essays are concise and relevant to today's eupraxopher. Many topics are covered, including ethics, religious faith, and the behavioral and social sciences. In "Naturalistic Ethics and the Open Question" and "Moral Faith and Ethical Skepticism Reconsidered," Kurtz thoroughly critiques G. E. Moore's famous open-question argument: "For any definition proposed, one could ask, but *is it good and why* should I accept your definition?" Kurtz asserts that this question has much in common with the traditional arguments of religion. He maintains that the question is a bad one and need never be asked in an extreme manner. Of special significance to secular humanists is Kurtz's essay "Existentialism, Kierkegaard, and Naturalism." In response to Kierkegaard's famous doctrine that "subjectivity is truth," Kurtz states that by using this method any philosophy—from Buddhism to Naziism, sexism, or racism—may be made true by the individual. And if these doctrines can be challenged, Christianity must also be open to critical examination. Throughout the book Kurtz clearly defends his position that "... the objective method is to some extent *unavoidable* if we are to live and function in the world, and everyone has to assume it up to a point; the same thing cannot be said of most other methods." (Norm Allen)

They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions by Paul F. Boller Jr. and John George (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). 159 pages. \$15.95. This little book is informative, interesting, and, at times, amusing. It begins with a quote by John Adams that many humanists, atheists, and freethinkers have been misusing for years: "This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it." Although Adams is quoted accurately, when read in context the meaning is clearly different from that which is implied when it stands alone.

Authors Boller and George not only find

quotes that have no source, they also explain many of the sayings and even correct minor errors for the reader. At times they show how and why the quote was used, revealing political and/or social intrigues.

According to the authors, the Far Right, and especially evangelists, are most likely to misuse quotes and create bogus quotes—zealots are the likeliest candidates to do so intentionally. Ronald Reagan is the most likely president to misuse quotes, and the late Joseph McCarthy, Republican Senator from Wisconsin, was the most likely politician to make them up.

They Never Said It covers personalities ranging from actors to politicians, movie stars to presidents.

Of special interest to humanists are entries concerning Charles Darwin's fake death-bed recantation; Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Thomas Paine on the Bible; Sol Gordon on "free love"; and *Humanist Manifesto II* on "unbridled sexuality."

They Never Said It is not only informative, it's great fun to read. (Tom Franczyk)

Dictionary of Science and Creationism, by Ronald L. Ecker (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990). 230 pages. \$32.95 cloth. The debate over creationism continues to rage across the country, in school-board meetings, classrooms, and court houses. One reason the creationists are able to present their case in a reasonable-sounding manner is the appalling scientific illiteracy of most Americans. This book will help readers understand just what creationists mean when they spout such terms as "abiogenesis," "Second Law of Thermodynamics," "uniformitarianism," and "vestigial organ." Don't let these terms throw you. Ecker writes in a nontechnical, down-to-earth way, and has geared his book for both general readers and educators who want to know just what the creationists are really talking about so as to be better able to counter their fallacious arguments. (Tim Madigan)

Deadly Blessings: Faith Healing on Trial, by Richard J. Brenneman (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990). 360 pages. \$21.95 cloth. To what extent are religious and spiritual practices that endanger the health of

believers permissible by law? Brenneman examines three court cases that address this sensitive issue of church/state separation: a Filipino "psychic surgeon" who claimed to remove cancerous tumors with his bare hands; a New Age psychotherapist whose bizarre treatments led to a man's death; and a Christian Science couple whose eighteen-month-old son died of bacterial meningitis after being treated with prayer and positive thinking. What leads people to accept these forms of spiritual healing, and to what extent are the believers themselves to blame when the hoped-for cures don't occur? Brenneman, an investigative reporter and former Christian Scientist, presents a compassionate yet thorough overview of the dangers of faith healing. (T.M.)

Convictions, by Sidney Hook (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990). 400 pages. \$24.95 cloth. The late Sidney Hook was a fighter all his life—a defender of the truth, an advocate of intellectual honesty, and a champion of secular humanist principles. This book, the first posthumous collection of his major essays, presents him at his best, tackling controversial issues with gusto. Notable selections include "The Ethics of Suicide," "Reflections on the Jewish Question," and "Allan Bloom's Critique of American Education: A Noble Failure." "The Attack on Civilization" deals with Hook's dispute over the courses in Western culture being taught at Stanford and other institutions, which he felt to be misrepresenting the bases of Western tradition and thought. He was hotly engaged in this debate right up to his death. Reading *Convictions*, one can appreciate fully that Sidney Hook was one of the twentieth century's greatest exponents of democracy as a vital way of life. (T.M.)

Robert G. Ingersoll: A Life, by Frank Smith (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990). 400 pages. \$29.95 cloth. Robert G. Ingersoll was one of the most famous orators of his day. Yet, sadly, this stout defender of human rights, free thought, and progressive causes is little-known today. Smith's new biography—the only biography currently in print—should do much to rectify this. By utilizing contemporary newspaper accounts and Ingersoll's private papers, Smith brings to life one of America's most prominent citizens. Of special interest to fans of Ingersoll will be the photographs, several of which have never before been published. This is a definitive account of the life and times of the most popular freethinker in the history of the United States. (T.M.)

In the Name of God

Holy orders!

Belgian police are on the trail of eight nuns who sold their convent for \$2 million and used some of the proceeds to buy a chateau in the Pyrenees mountains in the south of France. Police are also interested in the purchase of several racehorses and a \$120,000 Mercedes.

The nuns, led by Mother Superior Sister Anna, 61, were last seen heading away from Bruges in two cars and an ambulance. The ambulance was for Sister Agnes, 93, the eldest of the nuns and in frail health.

The nuns, who apparently did not ask the Vatican for permission to sell, are from the Poor Sisters of Clara order. (London Herald)

Maybe Santa Claus could help

Moshe Ben-Meir, director of the dead letter office in Jerusalem, often encounters the perplexing problem of what to do with letters addressed to God, Jesus, Mohammed, Moses, Solomon, King David, and the "Emperor of Israel."

"When a letter to God is sent to an address in New York, the post office there will likely forward it to Israel," said Ben-Meir, "Other post offices assume that God is here—and that I know where to find him."

Some of the letters are addressed simply to Jerusalem or Bethlehem. More specific addresses include "Seventh Heaven, Seat of Honor," and "120 Good Day St., Garden of Heaven." Some of the letter-writers appear confused about postage rates, said Ben-Meir, and don't bother with a stamp. "They think God will pay the postage due, I suppose," he said. (Linn's Stamp News, Beaumont, Texas)

Coincidence? You decide

An apparition of the Virgin Mary in Yugoslavia that has drawn millions of believers foretold the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, said participants at a conference on visions of the mother of Jesus. The two-day conference, at Duquesne University, was attended by more than 5,000 and focused on the increased number of reported messages and their link to the new freedoms in Communist bloc nations.

Robert Lacher, a participant from Wexford, Florida, said of the visions, "It just seems too coincidental to have her appear and then all of sudden the Communist regime starts falling apart." Funny, that's just what we would've said. (St. Petersburg Times)

Great seizures ghost!

On a related note, it has been theorized that a type of epileptic seizure may have caused Joan of Arc to see and hear saints.

Joan appears to have had a rare form of epilepsy called reflex epilepsy, says Lydia Bayne, assistant professor of neurology at the University of California at San Francisco. Reflex epilepsy is marked by complex partial seizures: brief periods of a slightly altered state of consciousness—often preceded by an aura, or warning—that can appear as visual or auditory hallucinations.

Berkeley writer Elizabeth Foote-Smith contacted Bayne after finding an English translation of the transcript of Joan's trial before she was burned at the stake at 19.

At the trial, Joan described "ecstatic" auras, feelings of bliss and elation before seeing saints. She said she had her visions every day, often immediately after hearing church bells ring. Reflex epilepsy is triggered by such stimuli as flickering lights or music. (Dallas Morning News)

So what are you trying to say, anyway?

A humor column in the Yakima, Washington, Herald Republic recently ran the following piece under the heading "The Classifieds":

PERSONALS. Tobacco-chewing redneck fundamentalist gun freak wishes to meet militant feminist secular humanist. Object: Acrimony.

Coitus interruptus Deo iuvante

A television technician was charged with federal criminal violations for allegedly interrupting the satellite transmission of a pornographic television show with religious messages.

Thomas Haynie, a CBN technician, was accused of using his employer's equipment

to break into transmissions of a program called "American Ecstasy" on the Playboy Channel.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of ten years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. The program was interrupted three times on September 6, 1987, with the video message: "Thus sayeth the Lord thy God. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand!"

No wonder turnout's been bad!

The Dallas Morning News reports that election officials intend to change a precinct number that angers some residents of Harris County, Texas—it will no longer be precinct 666, but 673.

Residents of the precinct told the Deer Park City Council that the number symbolizes the Antichrist in the Bible and that they would rather not vote than be associated with Satan.

A recent issue of the Washington Report carried a similar story, this time about British motorists who insisted that the number had given them "all kinds of trouble" and that it be dropped from automobile license plates.

Not everyone seems bothered by the evil digits, however. Americares, a disaster relief organization affiliated with some notable Catholic right-wingers, uses the number 1-800-666-HOPE for credit-card donations. Apparently Satan doesn't mind cleaning up after "acts of God."

Gay pigs shunned by Muslims

Believe it or not, members of a Muslim sect have set out to convert Ireland to the Islamic faith, according to London's Freethinker magazine. The Muslims have established a mission house in Galway, and they say that it is just the beginning. Freethinker quoted Mohammed Hanif, president of the mission, as expressing his belief that the "humble and devout" Irish will convert when they know the truth about Islam. "Of course there will have to be a certain change in their culture," he added ominously. But, said missionary Tasleem Ahmed, "The Irish will not find giving up drink hard. . . . The Arabs used to drink, but when Islam came they gave it up." Pork is also on the list of no-no's. The Freethinker presumably is not joking when it quotes Ahmed as saying: "It has been proven that the pig is the only homosexual animal. As this perversion is most prevalent in pork-eating nations, it is obvious that it gets into your genes through the meat." ●

Readers' Forum

The War on Drugs

George Bush's so-called War on Drugs benefits no one but organized crime.

To begin with, there is no such thing as "Drugs": there are many drugs and drug families.

Second, repeal is *not* deregulation. Alcohol and tobacco are not sold on street corners; they are regulated from here to next week. Since prohibition doesn't work, repeal and set up regulations that are rational and enforceable.

Third: soft hearts mask soft heads. The proper priority in drug policy is: first, prevent active recruitment; second, protect the bystanders; third, destroy syndicate profits; fourth, if you can help the addict, so much the better. As long as addiction is illegal, addicts face a huge barrier in dealing with it—they don't dare admit their problem, which is the first step. When the law says, in effect, "Go ahead and kill yourself if you insist," they will have that much less of a barrier between them and treatment. In addition, shifting the illegality from the addict to the processor and supplier will tell the police that they no longer keep up their arrest quotas by hauling in the same junkies time after time.

Some drugs may require prohibition. PCP sounds like a candidate. But a specific prohibition has a better chance of working, since, first, enforcement will not be tangled with today's impossible caseload; and second, the underground drug culture should start to break up soon after the major drugs are regulated sensibly.

In any case: first study the specific drug or drug family, working out what the users use it for, what else it does, how expensive it is manufacture or process, and where in the cycle of use the addict is dangerous to bystanders. Use this information to come up with rational, enforceable regulations.

Do not try for impossible, purely rhetorical goals like "a drug-free America." Do not demand that yes-trained consumers "Just Say No." Do not allow police to cycle the same junkies through the revolving door to generate meaningless arrest statistics.

Lee Burwasser
Landover, Md.

I take issue with FREE INQUIRY's recurrent suggested "theme" that the efforts to limit the prevalence of cocaine are an example of one group trying to dictate the "morality" of others. This is not a consideration of morality. Although the drug industry is provocatively replete with activities raising such questions, the confrontation here is whether collectively we are willing to accept the prevalence of cocaine in our communities. The economic considerations and the attempts to draw analogies between this substance and other drugs postpone or obscure the realization of the nature of the cocaine influence and the influence of the next generation of designer drugs that is sure to follow. Cocaine is an addictive pleasure-producing substance of sufficient influence that its craving may take precedence over a mother's care for her infant. There is no predictable immunity for the would-be casual, occasional user.

I applaud your critical review of this problem, but disagree that there is any role, licit or illicit, for the recreational use of cocaine in our communities. I do not believe the degree to which civil liberties have been interrupted through police and/or military activities antagonizing the drug distribution industry is inappropriate. The starting point for "free inquiry" is being in fact free, a state of mind inaccessible to the addicted mind.

George M. Jackson, M.D.
Orinda, Calif.

To find the solution to the drug problem one must first understand what the problem is in regard to society. The history of drugs is contained in the book, *Licit & Illicit Drugs* by Edward M. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports*, available from Laissez Faire Books of San Francisco. Once you read this book, then you will realize that the government policy on drugs is bankrupt and will never work.

As for the Bush administration's War on Drugs: while it may get Bush re-elected, it will accomplish nothing in the way of diminishing the problem, which seems to worsen with each new administration. One contributor to *Licit and Illicit Drugs* notes

that "Adults offer children many mood-altering and consciousness-altering trips," ranging from the cradle to the merry-go-round to the swing.

"Until a few years ago," the book continues, "most children in our society who wanted to continue to indulge in these states [as they grew older] were content to use alcohol, the one intoxicant we make available legally. Now, large numbers of young people are seeking chemical alterations of consciousness by means of a variety of illegal and medically disapproved drugs." To understand this change, society must "listen to what many drug users, themselves, say; they say they choose illegal drugs over alcohol in order to get better highs." And, we might add, fewer fights, fewer accidents, less devastating hangovers. You can see from this insight that the War on Drugs can continue until the fall of the republic, and drugs will still be there to plague the successors of the republic. Fighting drugs is just like pushing an overloaded cart up a slippery slope with nothing to hang onto. A true exercise in futility.

James Fletcher
Pittsburgh, Penn.

All of the now-illegal drugs were legal everywhere in our nation prior to 1875. The concept wasn't considered radical then, and there was nowhere near the addiction or crime rate there is now.

When government representatives (whom I understand consider themselves Christians) encourage children to have their parents imprisoned for drug use, *that* is radical! When I was growing up during the Cold War, the *worst* thing we were told was that the Soviet government encouraged Russian children to turn in their parents for political crimes. One wonders if Stalin was the inspiration for our representatives.

Other radical behavior on the part of our government in connection with drugs includes:

1. Confiscating property (in violation of rights clauses in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments) in drug-related crimes.
2. Conducting and encouraging others to conduct illegal searches and drug testing (in violation of the Fourth Amendment).
3. Granting drug monopolies (in violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment) exclusively to members of the medical profession.
4. Outlawing (in violation of the First Amendment) religious practices that involve drug use.

It has not been long since Ayatollah Khomeini proposed the goal of a drug-free Iran. At the time, I believe we all considered him (and his philosophy) radical. But in little more than a decade, the United States government has adopted his philosophy to the letter. In my view, those who consider legalization radical have it backwards. The *least* radical thing this nation could do would be to legalize drugs.

Brian Stedjee
Modesto, Calif.

I find it ironic that Steven Wisotsky ("Rethinking the War on Drugs," Spring 1990) recommends using less legal force to combat the use of currently illegal drugs while at the same time introducing measures such as "more restrictive hours of sale" and "taxes on these products" to curb the use of legal drugs *he* personally opposes, such as tobacco and alcohol. It is easy to demonstrate that more people use these latter substances than all currently illegal drugs combined. I wonder how Wisotsky overlooks the problems of black-marketing, inflated prices, quality control, and so on. (problems related to the ones he hopes to overcome by loosening regulations and restrictions with respect to currently illegal drugs) that will be forthcoming when his remedy is applied.

Garvin Chastain
Boise, Id.

President Bush's War on Drugs is a shameful waste of time and money that has no chance of succeeding without suspension of civil liberties. *Licit & Illicit Drugs* revealed almost two decades ago, *drug laws* and *drug law enforcement* cause nearly all of the problems the United States has experienced with drugs.

Drug use is a normal and universal part of human existence. Has anyone ever wondered why so many plants produce compounds that fit *perfectly* into receptors in the human brain? If you believe Darwin, and I do, this may have had fortuitous beginnings, but time has refined the arrangement because it offers advantages to both sides of what is indisputably an ancient relationship.

Most behaviors, drug use included, fit neatly under the bell curve. Take alcohol. Some prefer not to drink; most people drink responsibly and never have a problem with it; and some simply cannot control how

much they drink, and cause harm to themselves and others. It is this latter group that needs our concern and compassion. If our concern and compassion fail to change behaviors that are destructive to others, then and only then should our cops and courts become involved. I believe the same bell curve applies, and that the same rules should apply, to all currently illicit substances.

We need drug policies that are based on objective information and rational thinking, not mythology and subjective, culturally influenced taboos. We need elected officials who say: "It doesn't work, let's fix it." Clearly, the War on Drugs has not worked, is not working, and will not work unless our freedoms are severely curtailed. Success on that basis will certainly herald the end of our nation as we know it.

Ted Schaar
Wauwatosa, Wisc.

Steven Wisotsky's argument about the so-called War on Drugs is not convincing. He argues that a mere decline in the consumption rates in the 1980s cannot be proved to be the result of law enforcement, citing the fallacy of the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* argument. Yet two paragraphs later he asserts that the "fundamental fact of life is that the crack scene grew up and flourished under the regime of the War on Drugs."

What happened to logic? Why does he want to show mere coincidence in one case, and not in the second? It is not a question of logic. Proof, in the real world, is not a matter of logic, but of empirical evidence.

Third, Wisotsky claims the root of evil is money, not drugs. How does society establish the primary root? Excess profits are evil, but so are indiscriminate crack users who poison their bodies and encourage the poison to others under the name of pleasure.

Robert H. Whealey
Athens, Ohio

When War on Drugs advocates argue their viewpoint, they typically assume that legalization would involve large corporations selling and marketing drugs like they now do beer and breakfast cereal. Naturally the public is horrified at this image and most people accept the government's hysterical overreaction as the alternative.

What is needed is a proposal that is clearly anti-drug but still eliminates the profits and associated violence of the illegal drug

trade. I offer the following as a possible approach.

Legal drugs would be available only through government sources. While private companies would no doubt do a more efficient job of producing and distributing these substances, there should not be an economic incentive for anyone to promote a positive image of drugs as is now done for liquor and cigarettes, nor should there be a rich and powerful industry lobbying Congress to ease restrictions.

Government-sponsored anti-drug education programs would continue. Packaging of the government-produced drugs would contain warnings about their dangers. No one should get the impression that legalization implies approval.

Private sale of drugs would remain illegal with significant penalties, and there would be modest penalties for purchasing or possessing drugs obtained illegally.

Drug prices would be set no higher than the cost of production and distribution.

No more than one day's supply of drugs could be purchased. This would minimize purchases for resale.

Information about counseling and rehabilitation would be provided at all distribution centers. This information is never available from the local pusher.

This may not be the best of all possible plans, but it should be easy to recognize as superior to the current policy of mayhem by both the drug warmongers and the drug traffickers.

Robert Korn
St. Paul, Minn.

Editor's note: We want to know your opinions regarding issues of interest to humanists. We are still accepting letters on the War on Drugs, and also would like to hear from you concerning the following topics:

What do you think of the word "eupraxiophy" to describe "good conduct and wisdom in living"? Is humanism a eupraxiophy?

How does a humanist who does not believe in an afterlife deal with the death of a loved one?

We welcome your letters on these topics, and encourage you to suggest topics for future Readers' Forums. Please type and double-space all copy. Send to Readers' Forum, Mary Beth Gehrman, editor, P.O. Box 5, Buffalo, New York 14215. ●

(Letters, continued from p. 3)

In at least one respect, Judaism is far less vile than other superstitions—like Hinduism (with its caste system), Islam (with its tolerance of slavery, fanaticism, and blood-letting), and Christianity (with its plethora of stupidities): there is far less of it, not only in terms of numbers of adherents, but in terms of the amount of theological fatuousness, complicated hierarchies, elaborate churches, rituals, arrogance and self-righteousness, aggressive proselytizing, blood-letting, persecutions, and many other evils.

In terms of sheer vileness, Judaism does not hold a candle to these other superstitions. A rabbi once said that the essence of Judaism is the golden rule and that the rest is just commentary. There is even a humanistic Judaism that dispenses with god superstition. No Christian sect that I know of has progressed that far.

Sidney Epstein
Alexandria, Va.

Dvorkin's article is too self-serving to be palatable.

First, he finds looking for anti-Semitism everywhere unacceptable, but ignores the fact that groups repeatedly exposed to noxious stimuli will sooner or later develop some type of protective mechanism, at times exaggerated, to avoid a recurrence. Dvorkin avoids his by becoming a humanist.

He then suggests that humanists should become more aggressive, even ruthless, in dealing with the religious. Certainly, the historical record proves beyond a doubt that people committed to a religious belief or faith are not amenable to reason or logic. Does Dvorkin really believe that more than a billion believers are neither intelligent nor self-respecting?

Humanists should communicate with all groups regardless of orientation in order to help create a better world for all of us.

Oscar J. Hurok, M.D.
Santa Monica, Calif.

David Dvorkin will remain a Jew to most people no matter how little he likes it.

Despite Dvorkin's comment that "ethnic Jew" is a "silly rationalization," I am an "ethnic Jew." I believe the description is apt. Dvorkin admits that Jews are "an ethnic community as well as a religious one." I have abandoned my religious faith, but I remain otherwise loyal to my cultural heritage and my folk. I can think of no better abbreviated description of this situation than "ethnic Jew."

In further reply to Dvorkin's article, alertness to anti-Semitism does not equate to a hatred for gentiles. It is a reasonable response to reality. Whatever its roots, anti-Semitism is prevalent everywhere. I state as truth what Dvorkin said with sarcasm: "Who can forget the six million?" I can't. But for the fact that my parents emigrated, my family would have been among the six million, regardless of whether they considered themselves not to be Jews.

Bernard Arkules
Paradise Valley, Ariz.

Optimistic humanism

A few thoughts on optimism and pessimism (Spring 1990). Isn't whether the glass is half full or half empty also a function of the purpose to which the glass and the water are to be put? For example, if an optimist is very thirsty, the glass might be half empty, indicating that his or her thirst is half-slaked. On the other hand, if the pessimist wants the glass to be empty—because it is used for some alternate purpose, perhaps—then it would be seen to be half full.

Finally, a quote from *The Sayings of Chairman Malcolm*, by the late Malcolm S. Forbes: "The ultimate in optimism—confidence that there is no next world."

Dan Karlan
Waldwick, N.J.

Offended by signs

There is a sign on a highway leading away from Hendersonville that is in such bad taste I would hope that an enlightened town such as this could find a diplomatic way to get rid of it.

It is the huge sign on U.S. 25 North that says "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Highways are no more suitable for this kind of proselytizing than restaurant placemats. Indeed, they have an effect opposite to what is intended, like the door-to-door efforts of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Such a sign is an affront to Catholics, liberal Protestants, those of Jewish or Buddhist faith, Christian Scientists, and philosophical theists, pantheists, agnostics, and atheists. Imagine how outraged fundamentalists would be if Catholics placed a similar sign that began "Hail Mary, full of grace . . ." or if a Unitarian sign said "Forget about God and work for a better world."

Martin Gardner
Hendersonville, N.C.

More on Nietzsche

This letter is to express my amusement with W. Stanley Rycroft's letter in the Spring 1990 issue of FREE INQUIRY. Rycroft's masterful use of ad hominem reasoning to evaluate philosophers opens up exciting new vistas of philosophical exploration. The irony of using such an approach with Friedrich Nietzsche, the author of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* is, to say the least, sublime! I wish that someone with both a razor-sharp mind and an interest in Christian theology (such as Rycroft) would examine a philosopher like Paul Tillich in such a rigorous, genealogical manner.

Some would see Rycroft's letter as a feeble attempt by a flaccid mind to discredit ideas he doesn't understand by petty personal attacks upon their originator. How wrong they would be! Rycroft can truly say with Nietzsche: *Unschütterlich ist meine Tiefe: aber sie glänzt von schwimmenden Ratseln und Gelächern*: "Imperturbable are my depths though they sparkle with effervescent riddles and laughter."

Dave Hunsaker
Woodinville, Wash.

Re: nuclear safety

Dr. Ernest G. Silver's letter about the safety of nuclear power in the Spring 1990 issue requires an answer. I have been in the metal-working industry all my adult life, starting as a boilermaker-welder, working up to general foremanship, then metallurgy, and from there to industrial engineering. As a foreman I worked for the Navy supervising the welding of nuclear piping and reactor parts. I later worked for a firm that manufactured nuclear reactor internals.

There I found that a tremendous difference exists between the standards established for government nuclear work and inspection and the standards established for private industry—and even they are not adhered to!

I shall not go into details, but these have turned me from a proponent of nuclear power to an opponent. Yes, Silver is right about "serious problems . . . due to competitive economics," which of course underlie lower standards. Sure, other power sources have had accidents and sometimes heavy fatalities, but it must be stated that these involved people on the job—never, to my knowledge, the general public, in a Chernobyl-like incident.

To challenge Steve Allen "to cite a single incident" is unacceptable for the simple reason that not only the public but also the

media have been totally blacked out from practically all nuclear accidents, the Three Mile Island reactor affair excepted. Only recently have cases surfaced that present serious public health hazards and that for decades have been unacknowledged by government sources. So far in this country serious accidents have been prevented by "more luck than brain"!

William A. Loeffler
Jackson Heights, N.Y.

Archaeology threatened

As a subscriber to FREE INQUIRY, and supporter—in general—of the aims and goals of CODESH, I would like to draw your attention to a most distressing attack now being mounted in several quarters against the forces of reason and inquiry.

This is the movement to stop field archaeologists from (necessary) excavation of human bones encountered during formal field work on archaeological sites, and the extension of this idea now to reburying (!) the skeletal material of ancient peoples currently in museums and study collections.

The "front lines," as it were, are currently in California. However, this battle has been raging elsewhere, too, including Hawaii, Tennessee, Alabama, and Washington, D.C. Doubtless there are foreign parallels, too.

The point is, I believe, that scientifically trained archaeologists are directly threatened in their work. Thus, academic freedom of inquiry is under attack—and the implications of this to all rationalists everywhere are obvious. Since CODESH lists support for "the principles of inquiry" prominently in its self-definition and further endorses "the scientific outlook and the use of scientific method in acquiring knowledge," I think it fitting that the organization speak out in your columns in support of the California archaeologists, and any other like-threatened archaeologists and anthropologists. They clearly warrant the unambiguous support, encouragement, and endorsement of CODESH. Thank you for allowing me to draw this matter to the attention of your readers.

B. W. Powell
W. Redding, Ct.

Moral education

I don't agree with Tim Madigan ("Moral Education and Critical Thinking, Winter 1989/90) that school lessons in morality would necessarily be forgotten "once the

recess bell rings." Why wouldn't they be just as subject to recall as spelling or math lessons, especially if integrated with the rest of the curriculum and accompanied by stimulating homework? If the once-a-week Bible stories of the past can be given credit for cementing moral behavior, then surely a concentrated school program would be even more effective.

As children, we tend to believe whatever we are taught, and there are no sharp divisions separating the knowledge acquired in school and that gleaned from other sources. The "real world" for students, particularly younger ones, consists mostly of their relationships with their peers and families, and these interactions would provide a daily opportunity for the application of those moral principles learned in the classroom. As students mature, they will undoubtedly find discrepancies between academic ethics and the practices of a complex society, but that is true of any subject. We must at least provide them with a starting point and a basis for comparison. I see no reason that courses in logic and morality should be excluded from the schools simply because children will "perceive a difference."

Our main responsibility as parents and educators is to help our children become sensitive, thinking adults, capable of both compassion and critical analysis. Most of life's important lessons are learned in either the home or the classroom. Since today's home often fails to provide a moral education, we have no current, viable alternative except the school. Let us begin soon and in kindergarten.

Elizabeth F. Lafler
N. Tonawanda, N.Y.

We definitely need to include self-esteem and moral humanistic guidelines in school—not offered as separate curricula, but incorporated into teachings from building blocks to algebra. Youngsters who are indoctrinated into religious morality are doomed to play out centuries-old battles of the sexes, races, species, and so on. Their thought-processes will go only as far as the Bible, Torah, or Koran allows, and their consciences will remain untroubled because of this early training. Critical thinking is sorely needed.

I suspect "dumbth" is the brain's self-preservation device to shield against the bombardment of stimuli encountered in our modern world. I wholeheartedly agree that we all need to recognize our mental blinders. I believe that many people put up such blinders to the true meaning of religion in order to maintain a reasonable distance yet

remain on God's good side for safety sake.

For the same reason, people don't walk under ladders or break mirrors and must avoid the nefarious black cat. It's the path of least resistance to just accept that such things are unsafe practices and put out of our minds the idea of seeking complicated rational explanations. This way we can go about our business of raising the family and earning a buck. People do not easily give up their superstitions. They'd rather be forced to accept than muster free will. Why else do we have a God or Jesus to call upon?

Pat Kelley
Sacramento, Calif.

On faith-healing

If the Faith-Healing Investigation Project and CODESH want to stamp out faith-healing, there are several ways in addition to James Randi's and others' excellent exposés:

1. Lobby for a national health-insurance bill. Some people go to psychic surgeons and other faith-healers because they haven't money for physicians and hospital operations. As one person in my data said, they want "a miracle for \$35."

2. Support research on better treatments for conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, dysplasia, and so on, for which medical treatment is unpleasant, ineffective, or both, and on cures for conditions like MS, MD, and genetic diseases like ALS, Huntington's chorea, and sickle-cell for which no cures exist.

3. Support research on ways sufferers from such diseases can keep working and live bearable lives.

4. Work for better science education for children in poorly funded school districts (and for many of the rest of us). That includes better equipment, smaller classes and class loads, more imaginative teaching.

5. Speak out for better jobs for people in the new underclass. Someone with children who earns \$4 an hour can't afford proper medical care. He, or more probably she, just hopes the family stays well despite poor nutrition and other bad circumstances.

I'm not blaming humanists for these situations, but I believe we all bear responsibility for ending them. We desperately need new solutions for the problems that are destroying our society. FREE INQUIRY's demonstrated concern for ethics and social justice could help do that.

Kate Ware Ankenbrandt
Oak Park, Mich. ●

Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH, Inc.)

Paul Kurtz, Chairman; Jean Millholland, Executive Director

The Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH) is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt educational organization dedicated to fostering the growth of the traditions of democracy and secular humanism, and the principles of free inquiry in contemporary society. In addition to publishing *FREE INQUIRY* magazine and the *Secular Humanist Bulletin*, CODESH sponsors many organizations and activities, and is also open to Associate Membership.

African-Americans for Humanism

Norm Allen Jr., Executive Director

Brings the ideals of humanism to the African-American community.

Center for Inquiry (Media Productions)

Tom Flynn, Executive Director

Produces radio and television programs presenting skeptical and secular humanist viewpoints on a variety of topics.

Robert G. Ingersoll Memorial Committee

Philip Mass, Chairman

Dedicated to restoring the Robert G. Ingersoll birthplace in Dresden, New York, and to keeping his memory alive; publishes the *Ingersoll Report* newsletter.

James Madison Memorial Committee

Robert Alley, Chairman

Keeps alive James Madison's commitment to the First Amendment and to liberty of thought and conscience.

Secular Organization for Sobriety (SOS)

James Christopher, Executive Director

A secular alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous with more than 200 local groups throughout North America. Publishes a newsletter available by subscription.

Secular Humanist Aid and Relief Program (SHARP)

Jean Millholland, Director

Assists victims of natural disasters through secular efforts.

Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies (ASHS)

The Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies is a network created for mutual support among local and/or regional societies of secular humanists, which offer educational and social services to their members and seek to increase the understanding and influence of secular humanism in their communities. ASHS, on behalf of CODESH, will recognize such societies, which are autonomous and self-governing, provided they agree with the principles of secular humanism. Such societies are explicitly educational and nonreligious. ASHS publishes a newsletter, the "Secular Humanist Community," edited by Fred Condo and Tim Madigan in association with Paul Kurtz. If you are interested in starting a group in your area, please contact Tim Madigan, Box 5, Buffalo, NY 14215-0005, (716) 834-2921, FAX (716) 834-0841.

Albany. Dennis Bender, P.O. Box 2148, Scotia, NY 12302.

Berkeley. Molleen Matsumura, Box 5313, Berkeley, CA 94705.

Boston. Rick Monnier, P.O. Box 226, Brookline, MA 02146.

Chicago. Jim Zaluba, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Park, IL 60303.

Ft. Lauderdale. Irvin Leibowitz, 5009 Arthur St., Hollywood, FL 33021.

Greenville. Jacques Benbassat, Suite 168, Box 3000, Taylors, SC 29687.

Kansas City. Woody Williams, P.O. Box 429, Peculiar, MO 64078.

Las Vegas. Loretta Cardaronella, 240 N. Jones Blvd., Ste. 106, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

Londonderry. Margaret Bennett, P.O. Box 368, Londonderry, NH 03053.

Los Angeles. Edythe McGovern, P.O. Box 661496, Los Angeles, CA 91203.

Miami. Robert Healy, 6812 SW 66th Ave., S. Miami, FL 33143.

Morristown. Donald Worsfold, 74 King George Road, Warren, NJ 07060.

New Orleans. Damon Minvielle P.O. Box 24308, New Orleans, LA 70184-4308.

New York. Warren Smith, 31 Jane St., Apt. 10-D, New York, NY 10014.

Orlando. Andrée Spuhler, Box 724, Winter Park, FL 32790.

Pittsburgh. Victor Bernard, 325 Park Ave., W. Mifflin, PA 15122.

Reading. Bruce Nappi, P.O. Box 63, Reading, MA 01867.

San Francisco. Jim Dahlgren, P.O. Box 27492, San Francisco, CA 94127-0492.

San Jose. Jim Stauffer, P.O. Box 4396, Mountain View, CA 94040.

San Rafael. Lloyd Licher, P.O. Box 6022, San Rafael, CA 94903.

Shreveport. Richard Pevey, P.O. Box 17775, Shreveport, LA 71138.

Siskiyou. Michael Roesch, P.O. Box 223, Weed, CA 96094.

Washington, D.C. Lois Porter, P.O. Box 15319, Washington, D.C. 20003.

Humanist Association of Canada Chapters

Laval. Libre Pensee Quebecoise, C.P. 92, Succ. St. Martin Laval, Quebec. H7V 3P4.

Embrun. Richard Thain, Humanist Association of Ottawa, Box 341, 9 Heritage, Embrun, ON K0A 1W0.

Mansfield. Goetz Koechlin, Huronia Humanists, RR #4, Mansfield, ON L0N 1M0.

Dundas. Derek Watters, Hamilton-Burlington Hum. Society, 8 Sunrise Blvd., Dundas, ON L9H 3R9.

Scarborough. John and Olsa Van deVen, Metro. Toronto Humanist Society, 119 Roebuck Drive, Scarborough, ON M1K 2H7.

Sarnia. Peter R. Smith, Sarnia Humanists, 1688 Willowbrook Crescent, Sarnia, ON N7S 5P2.

Winnipeg. Harold and Margaret Robson, Humanists of Winnipeg, 871 Grosvenor Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2M 0M4.

Calgary. Brian G. Hansen-Usher, Calgary Humanists, 1229 Cameron Ave. SW, #401, Calgary AB T2T 0L1.

Vancouver. Glenn M. Hardie, Humanist Assoc. Greater Vancouver, P.O. Box 35561, Station E, Vancouver, BC V6M 4G8.

Victoria. Irene Brereton, Victoria Humanists, 1680 Poplar Ave., #204, Victoria, BC V8P 4K7.

In addition, there are four secular humanist computer networks we encourage you to use: **Citadel of Humanism BBS** (Tel. 818/339-4704); **Freethinkers Network** (Compuserve ID No. 75216,2000); **Rational Life BBS** (Tel. 205/837-6766); **Secular Humanist Exchange BBS** (Tel. 919/945-3847).

Saturday, November 3, *continued*

9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.: **(B) Humanism and Feminism**

Chair: **Mary Beth Gehrman**, managing editor, FREE INQUIRY.

Guests: **Cathy Costello**, membership coordinator, Secular Humanist Society of New York **Molleen Matsumura**, editorial associate, FREE INQUIRY.
Barbara Eisenstadt, psychology counselor, Albany, N.Y.

11:00 A.M. – 12:00 NOON: **African-Americans for Humanism**

Chair: **Norm Allen**, director, African-Americans for Humanism.

Guest: **Ishmael Jaffree**.

2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.: **Humanism, Libertarianism, and Altruism**

Chair: **Joe Barnhart**, professor of philosophy, University of North Texas.

Guests: **Jan Narveson**, professor of philosophy, University of Waterloo.

Alfie Kohn, consultant; author, *The Brighter Side of Human Nature*.

Joan Kennedy Taylor, author.

6:30 P.M.: **Comedy at the Duck Soup Comedy Club**

"Give Me Comedy or Give Me Death" with humor writer **Don Stevens**.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4

9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.: **Concurrent Sessions**

(A) Love and Liberty / Sexual Freedom

Chair: **Tom Flynn**, co-editor, *Secular Humanist Bulletin*.

Guests: **Marvin Kohl**, professor of philosophy, SUNY Fredonia,

Robert Rimmer, author, *The Harrod Experiment*.

(B) Living Without Religion

Chair: **Tim Madigan**, executive editor, FREE INQUIRY.

Guest: **Skipp Porteous**, editor, *The Freedom Writer*.

10:30 A.M. – 12:00 NOON: **Concurrent Sessions**

(A) Raising Children Humanistically

Chair: **Molleen Matsumura**.

Guests: **Lisa Kuhmerker**, editor, *Moral Education Forum*. **Anthony Picchioni**, professor of history, Northlake College / Marriage and Family Counselor.

(B) Dying Without Religion

Chair: **Gerald Larue**.

1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.: **Robert Ingersoll: A Successful Humanist**

Leader: **Philip Mass**, chairman, Robert G. Ingersoll Memorial Committee.

3:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.: **Open Forum**

ALSO 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.: Special Event — SOS Second National Meeting

Leader: **Jim Christopher**, founder, SOS (Secular Organizations for Sobriety).

YES, I (we) plan to attend FREE INQUIRY's 1990 Conference. Enclosed is:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| ☐ Early registration for _____ person(s) \$89 each (\$99 after Sept. 1) | \$ _____ |
| ☐ Friday luncheon for _____ person(s) \$25 each | \$ _____ |
| ☐ Friday banquet for _____ person(s) \$40 each | \$ _____ |
| ☐ Saturday comedy club for _____ person(s) \$8 each | \$ _____ |
| ☐ Sunday SOS Meeting <i>only</i> for _____ person(s) \$25 each | \$ _____ |
| | Total \$ _____ |

For accommodations at the Boston Marriott Copley Place, call 1-800-228-9290. Mention FREE INQUIRY and receive a conference discount.

☐ Check enclosed ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa # _____ Exp. _____

Name _____

Address _____ Daytime phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Return to: **Jean Millholland, FREE INQUIRY, Box 5, Buffalo, N.Y. 14215-0005 • (716) 834-2921**

You are cordially invited to attend FREE INQUIRY's Ninth Annual Conference

HUMANISM AND LIBERTY

A celebration of the bicentennial of the Bill of Rights

**Thursday, November 1 to Sunday, November 4, 1990
at the Boston Marriott Copley Place, Boston, Massachusetts**

**featuring: Alan Dershowitz • Stephen Jay Gould • Alfie Kohn • Ishmael Jaffree
Gerald Larue • Jan Narveson • James Randi • E. O. Wilson**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1

7:30 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.: **Welcoming Reception**

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2

9:00 A.M. - 12:00 NOON: **Religion and Liberty**

Chair: **Ron Lindsay**, attorney, Washington, D.C.

Guests: **Robert Alley**, professor of humanities, University of Richmond. **Ishmael Jaffree**, attorney, Youngstown, Ohio. **Florence Flast**, chair, Public Education and Religious Liberty (PEARL).

12:00 NOON - 2:00 P.M.: **Luncheon**

Speaker: **Alan Dershowitz**, attorney, columnist; professor, Harvard Law School.

2:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.: **Humanism and Atheism**

Chair: **Tom Franczyk**, co-editor, *Secular Humanist Bulletin*.

Guests: **Michael Martin**, professor of philosophy, Boston University. **Gordon Stein**, editor, *The American Rationalist*.

3:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.: **Humanist Laureates on Humanism and Science**

Chair: **Paul Kurtz**, professor of philosophy, SUNY Buffalo; editor FREE INQUIRY.

Guests: **Stephen Jay Gould**, author; professor of geology, Harvard University.
E. O. Wilson, author; professor of science, Harvard University.

7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.: **Awards Banquet**

Honorees: **Stephen Jay Gould**, **Gordon Stein**, **James "the Amazing" Randi**, **Ishmael Jaffree**.

Entertainer: **Dan Barker**, Freedom From Religion Foundation.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3

9:00 A.M. - 12:00 NOON: **Concurrent Sessions**

(A) The Roots of Religious Liberty

Chair: **Gerald Larue**, professor emeritus, USC; chairman, CSER.

Guests: **Ralph Ketchum**, professor of political science, Syracuse University.
R. Joseph Hoffmann, professor of humanities, California State University, Sacramento. **Glenn Tinder**, professor of political science, University of Massachusetts/Boston.

Continued on inside back cover